

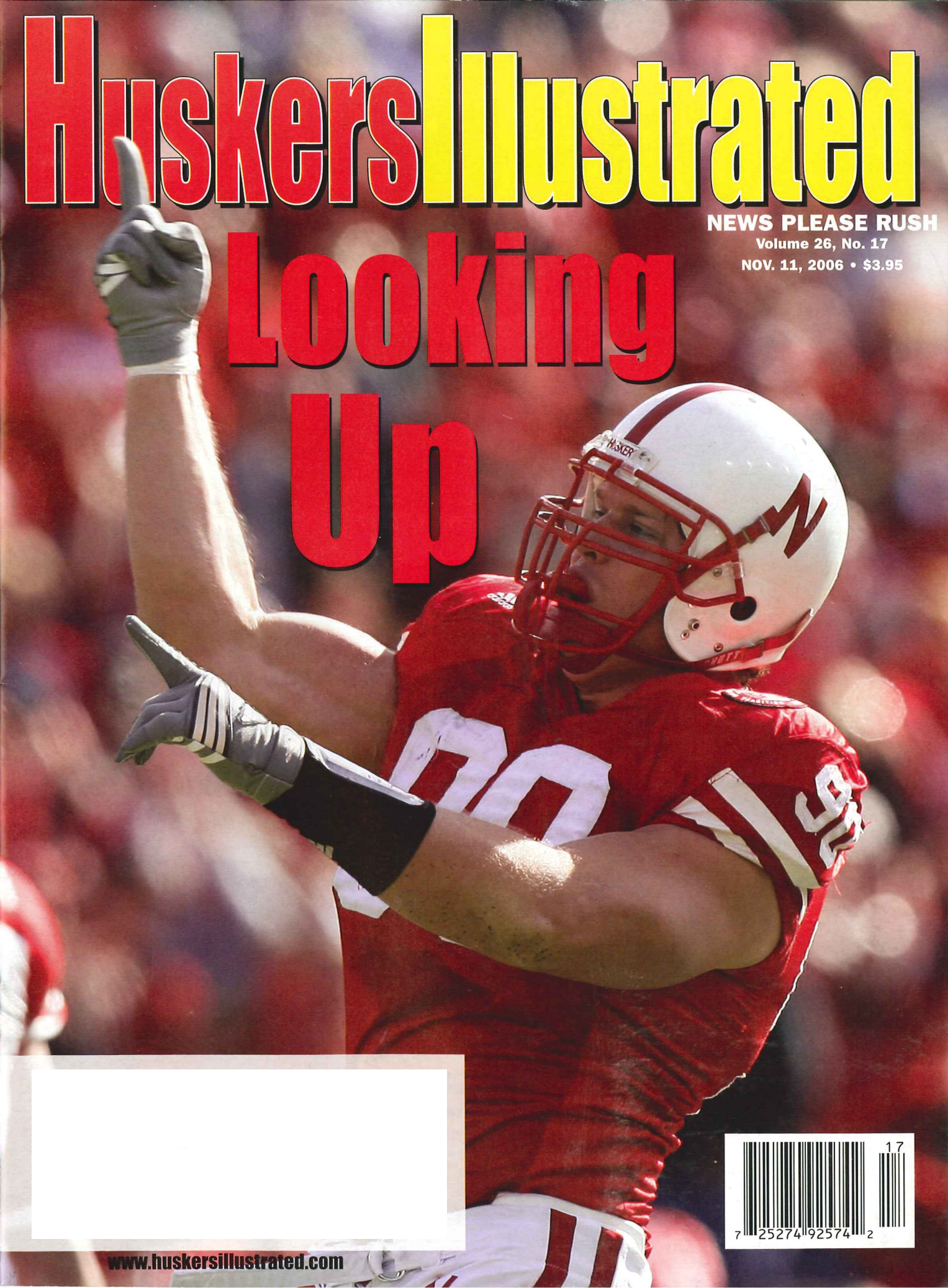
Huskers Illustrated

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Volume 26, No. 17

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Looking Up



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"Sporty" the Torch predicts:
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Missouri 13

October 22, 2006	Warrior Challenge Adventure Race	Ashland, NE
January 11, 2007	Panama Trail Run	Panama, NE
February 14, 2007	Panama Adventure Race	Panama, NE
March 14, 2007	Panama Mountain Bike Enduro Race	Panama, NE
April 1, 2007	The Link - Urban Adventure Race*	Lincoln, NE
April 21, 2007	F.O.P 29 Adventure Race**	Wagon Train Lake, NE
May 26-27, 2007	12-Hour Mountain Bike Relay	Branched Oak Lake, NE
June 14, 2007	Run, Row, Rock and Roll Adventure Race	Fairbury, NE
July 21, 2007	Cornhusker State Games Adventure Race	Branched Oak Lake, NE
August, 2007	Norfolk Adventure Race***	Norfolk, NE
September, 2007	Killer Kayak Challenge	Omaha, NE
October 21, 2007	Warrior Challenge Adventure Race	Ashland, NE

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Back On Track

*Impressive victory over Missouri
gives Huskers chance to build momentum*



**Brian
HILL**

STRANGER THINGS have certainly happened, but barring a major meltdown in the remaining two games of the regular season, Nebraska will be a participant in the Dec. 2 Big 12 Championship game in Kansas City.

The Huskers control their own destiny after knocking off Missouri, which had shared the lead in the Big 12 North. NU needs to win this week at Texas A&M or defeat Colorado Nov. 24 in Lincoln to earn its first bid to the title game since 1999.

Yes, winning one of two will get the Huskers to Kansas City, but they really need to not have a letdown after an impressive 34-20 victory over the Tigers on a beautiful November Saturday for Homecoming festivities.

"We put ourselves in a pretty good position, but we still have to take it one at a time and focus on our business on the road as we get ready for Texas A&M," coach Bill Callahan said.

Beating the Aggies at College Station is never easy, but both their losses this season have come at Kyle Field. A&M lost 31-27 to Texas Tech Sept. 30 and a 17-16 heartbreaker to Oklahoma the first Saturday in November.

After facing two freshmen quarterbacks and two sophomores the last four weeks, the Huskers will see another talented sophomore in A&M's Stephen McGee, who has completed 62.6 percent

of his passes for 1,816 yards and 11 touchdowns and rushed for 482 yards.

A "bigger" concern when defending the Aggies' running game is 274-pound sophomore running back Jorvorskie Lane, who has 616 yards this season and 18 touchdowns, one short of the A&M season record.

Nebraska will need to duplicate some of the things it did well against Missouri — a well-balanced offense that converted 11-of-17 third-downs while allowing no sacks and an opportunistic defense that forced three turnovers, two leading directly to touchdowns.

You can read more about the Huskers' rebound from a disappointing performance at Oklahoma State in this week's edition of *Huskers Illustrated*.

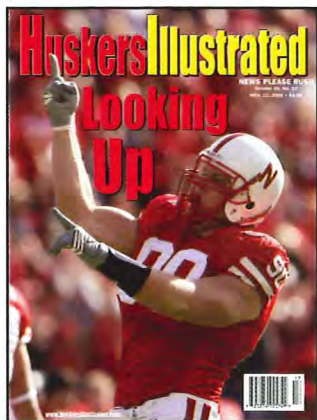
Our "Recruiting Through the Years" series continues with a look at the 1985 recruiting class that included quarterback Steve Taylor and defensive end Broderick Thomas. Sophomore tackle Lydon Murtha is the subject of "Spotlight," and place-kicker/holder

Jake Wesch answers "10 Questions."

Wesch threw a touchdown pass on a fake field goal against Kansas State earlier this season. The trick play list grew when wide receiver Maurice Purify took a pitch from Taylor and threw a touchdown pass to Terrence Nunn to give NU a 10-0 lead over Missouri late in the first quarter.

That continued the Huskers' trend of fast starts. They have now outscored opponents 96-10 in the first period and 196-83 in the first half.

Another fast start will be important this week. Yes, Nebraska can lose to the Aggies and still represent the North in Kansas City on the first Saturday of December. But a three-game winning streak to end the regular season would be huge entering a probable rematch with powerful Texas. ■



ON THE COVER

Nebraska defensive end Adam Carriker celebrates after intercepting a tipped pass late in the first quarter. The Huskers needed just six plays to score their second touchdown and take a 17-0 lead en route to a 34-20 victory over Missouri. Cover photo by Scott Bruhn.

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Huskers Illustrated

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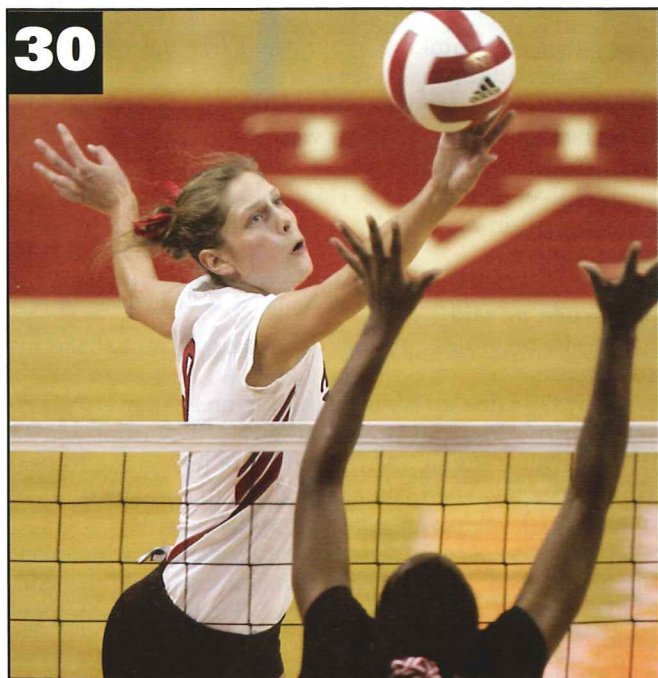
Nebraska told Steve Taylor (above) that it planned to recruit only one scholarship quarterback, and he was at the top of the list. "I thought that was awesome," said Taylor. *By Mike Babcock*

NEXT ISSUE

The Texas A&M review/Colorado preview edition will be mailed Nov. 13. Check for updates at huskersillustrated.com.

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He Likes That Stuff

Maurice Purify has emerged as the big-play receiver he was expected to be. In addition, the junior from Eureka, Calif., by way of San Francisco City College, has become a media favorite as well as a fan favorite because of his candor and unpretentious sense of humor.

On the Thursday before the Texas game, he got a telephone call from a blocked number, "so it was a '000' area code," he said, and the caller "let me know that he was a Texas fan.

"I talked to him a little bit. I like that stuff. I talked to him as long as I possibly could."

The caller had been "studying" him and told him that he didn't run good routes and that the Longhorns were "going to beat us up and down the field," he said.

The caller told him, "You

at the Texas game, which included snow flurries in the fourth quarter and a biting north wind throughout. "I had trouble staying warm and my hamstrings were getting a little tight," he said. Plus, "people were hogging the heaters." And those hogging the sideline heaters weren't just from California and Florida. They were from Nebraska, too.

He had never seen snow falling, he said. "I just thought it rose up from the ground or something."

Despite the weather, he doesn't regret his decision to come to Nebraska. "I'm in the right place for me," he said. "This is the right atmosphere." And, most importantly, "the right offense."

With each passing week that has become more and more apparent.

SUPERSTITION

Before every game, and every practice, sophomores Jordan Congdon and T.J. O'Leary go through the routine. One will run pass routes, a couple of fades and a couple of corner-post patterns, and the other will throw the passes. Then they'll reverse roles. At the end of the routine, O'Leary, Lane Kelly's back-up as long-snapper, will kick a field goal to win an imaginary game. His longest is 45 yards.

The routine began last season before the Kansas State game, in which Congdon kicked a game-winning, 40-yard field goal with 1:05 remaining. Since then, they go through it without fail.

"Jordan wanted to test out his quarterback skills one day, and we were just warming up," O'Leary said, explaining. "I figured I'd run a couple of routes for him. And then we switched off.

"Sometimes the (student) managers try to play defense, but they can't cover me."

O'Leary, who is "very superstitious," regards the routine as important. "It almost carries over," he said. "If I throw a couple of bad balls, it seems like practice doesn't go as smoothly."

His game-day superstitions include not only the pregame routine but getting "dressed the same way" and doing the same things in the same way on the sideline during the game.

"As a specialist I've got a lot of time to observe," he said. "I like to stand just right at the first-down marker on offense and I follow the team as they drive down the field.

"When we're on defense, I stand just behind the original line of scrimmage."

And when he can't do that, or follow the offense any farther, because of the team box, he stands as close to the spot as he can. "That's one of my big superstitions," he said. ■



Scott Brown

Maurice Purify had a 63-yard touchdown catch in the Texas game.

suck. You're not good."

A reporter asked, jokingly, if he could recognize Texas coach Mack Brown's voice. Purify responded in the spirit of the question. "Naw, I don't think it was him," said Purify. "But I enjoy that stuff. I get a kick out of it. I just know that he's thinking about me. I like the other team thinking about me."

The more an opposing player thinks about him, "the more he's not thinking about what he's got to do," Purify said. And that manifests itself in trash talking. "It's just competitive. That's all it is. He wants his team to win, and if he can get in my skin by doing all that, then he's going to try to do it."

Trash talking was commonplace in junior college even at practice, he said.

Words, regardless of how disparaging, can't shake his confidence.

"Any DB I line up against I think I can beat, every play," said Purify. "You can praise the guy across from you so much because if you line up and think he's going to beat you every play. Then you're not going to win any of them (match-ups). I think I can beat every DB we play."

Also, he is not intimidated by opposing fans when playing on the road. In fact, "I like being on the road," he said. "I like people heckling me. It drives me. It makes me play better."

Purify had never played in conditions as cold as those



T.J. O'Leary



Jordan Congdon

Quick Hits

HOOPS RECRUITS

New Nebraska men's basketball coach Doc Sadler has wasted no time in recruiting. The Cornhuskers reportedly have oral commitments from at least four players and possibly five, the most recent being Josh "Cookie" Miller, a 5-foot-8, 160-pound guard from Charleston, W.V., by way of a prep school in Cincinnati, Harmony Community School. The Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha World-Herald both reported that Miller will sign a letter of intent with Nebraska in November.

The Cornhuskers previously had received commitments from Alex Chapman, a 6-9, 230-pound forward from Sheridan (Wyo.) College; Shang Ping, a 6-10, 235-pound forward-center from Illinois Central College; and Alonzo Edwards, a 6-7, 220-pound forward from Klein Forest High School in Houston. In addition, Steve Harley, a 5-11, 170-pound guard from Temple Hills, Md., by way of South Plains (Texas) College, apparently has made an oral commitment to Nebraska.

With only two seniors on the roster, Charles Richardson and Marcus Perry, and one scholarship open, the Cornhuskers will have only three available for the 2007-08 season.



Josh Miller

SEASON OPENER

Sadler's team will open the regular season against Nebraska-Omaha at the Devaney Sports Center on Nov. 14 before playing intrastate rival Creighton at the Sports Center on Nov. 18. A game against Lubbock Christian at the Sports Center on Nov. 21 also was a late addition to the schedule, which includes a record 19 regular-season games at the Sports Center.

The Cornhuskers are 356-114 (.757) since the Sports Center opened in 1976-77.

At least 18 of Nebraska's games will be televised this season, including 10 within the state on FSN Midwest — six of them road games and five in conference play.

The FSN schedule: **Nov. 29** — North Texas; **Dec. 30** — at Miami; **Jan. 10** — at Iowa State; **Jan. 17** — at Oklahoma; **Jan. 24** — Texas; **Jan. 27** — at Kansas State; **Feb. 7** — at Texas Tech; **Feb. 10** — Texas A&M; **Feb. 13** — Kansas State; **Feb. 21** — at Baylor.

Big 12 television package: **Jan. 13** — Oklahoma State (ESPN regional); **Jan. 20** — Colorado (ESPN regional); **Jan. 29** — Kansas (ESPN); **Feb. 3** — at Missouri (ESPN regional); **Feb. 17** — at Kansas (ESPN); **Feb. 24** — Missouri (ESPN regional); **March 3** — at Colorado (ESPN regional); Big 12 Tournament at Oklahoma City (ESPN regional or ESPN2).

WOMEN'S GOLF

Junior Elli Brown shot an even-par 72 in the final round to lead coach Robin Krapfl's Huskers to a tie for ninth place in the 17-team Auburn Tiger-Derby Invitational at Auburn, Ala. Brown finished in a tie for seventh place individually with a two-round total 149 — four shots behind the medalist.

Rain caused the cancellation of the tournament's first day.

Brown, who went into the second round tied for 22nd, finished in the top 10 for a fifth consecutive tournament. The Huskers' other finishers: Kate White, 82-71-153 (22t); Chrissie McArdle, 75-80-155 (34t); JC Stevenson, 77-82-159 (64t); Andrea Carlson, 81-83-164 (80t).

Host Auburn won the tournament by 12 strokes over runner-up Alabama in a field that included 15 teams that qualified for NCAA regional competition in 2006 and eight teams that advanced to the 24-team NCAA championships. Nebraska was tied with Birmingham-Southern College.

The Huskers were scheduled to finish the fall season in the 16-team, NGCA Match Play Championships in Orlando, Fla., Nov. 3-5.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Husker women's team finished third at the Big 12 Championships at Lawrence, Kan., its best finish since 1997, with junior Channing Anseth and sophomore Ari Goldstein both

earning all-conference recognition, with top-15 finishes. "We are ecstatic," coach Jay Dirksen said.

Anseth finished 12th (21:32.21) and Goldstein finished 13th (21:33.76). Nebraska hasn't had multiple all-conference honorees since 1992: All-Americans Fran ten Bensele and Theresa Stelling.

The other Husker finishes: Natalja Zarcenko, 27th (22:17.51); Kim Pancoast, 28th (22:18.36); Jennifer Pancoast, 30th (22:45.43); Betsy Miller, 31st (22:29.12); Joslyn Dalton, 44th (22:45.96); Elizabeth Marsh, 82nd (24:12.89); Val Zajac, 96th (25:34.86). Only the first seven finishers count in team scoring.

"This team just has great chemistry," said Dirksen.

The Husker men's team finished 11th, with sophomore Brian Parr as the top finisher at No. 46 (25:52.00). The other finishers were: Alec Maduza, 75th (26:53.20); Ethan Luebke, 76th (26:54.20); Kyle Custer, 78th (27:03.60); Bryce Dickmeyer, 84th (27:13.90); Bryce Somer, 102nd (30:56.70).

Colorado won the women's competition, followed by Texas Tech, Nebraska, Oklahoma State and Baylor. The Buffaloes also won the men's competition, followed by Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma State and Iowa State. The individual champions were: women — Sally Kipyego, Texas Tech (20:00.28); men — Colby Wissel, Kansas (24:34.40). Nebraska's next competition is at the NCAA Midwest Regional in St. Paul, Minn. on Nov. 11. The Husker women were fifth at the 2005 Midwest Regional.

ACADEMICS

Twelve Husker cross country runners earned Academic All-Big 12 recognition, including 11 first-team honorees. They were: (men) Custer, Dickmeyer, Maduza and Parr, second team; (women) Anseth, Dalton, Goldstein, Miller, Jennifer Pancoast, Kim Pancoast, Sara Prince and Zajac.

Kim Pancoast earned first-team honors for a fourth consecutive year, while Dickmeyer earned first-team honors for a third consecutive year. Goldstein was among only 13 honorees with a perfect grade-point average. First-team recognition requires a 3.20 or better GPA, second-team 3.00 to 3.19.



Lauren Bailey

SWIMMER OF THE WEEK

Husker senior Lauren Bailey was the first Big 12 women's swimmer of the week for the 2006-07 season, earning the honor for meets through Oct. 22. Bailey swam to a team-high six victories in three dual meets, including an NCAA provisional-qualifying time of 16:48.46 in the 1,650 freestyle against Texas. She won three races in the opening meet of the season against Missouri State. Bailey is a three-time NCAA Championship qualifier and received All-America honorable mention in 2006.

Bailey and senior Kate Wheeler combined for five victories in leading the Huskers to a 168-132 victory against Arkansas at the Devaney Natatorium at the end of October.

The Huskers' next competition is the Minnesota Invitational Nov. 17-19 at Minneapolis.

RIFLE RESULTS

The Nebraska rifle team improved its record to 2-1 with a 4,648-4,564 victory against the Naval Academy at the E.F. Horton Range in Fairbanks, Alaska, in late October. Senior Kristina Fehlings shot the match-high score in air rifle (590) while junior Kirsten Weiss won smallbore (584).

TOMERLIN DISMISSED

Coach Bill Callahan announced the dismissal of sophomore tight end Justin Tomerlin from the football team on the Monday after the Oklahoma State game. Tomerlin, rated a four-star recruit out of high school in San Clemente, Calif., transferred to Nebraska from Butler County (Kan.) Community College after originally signing a letter of intent with Florida State. He appeared in three games this season after redshirting last season. He was dismissed for unspecified violation of team policies and regulations. ■

'Really A Nice Mix'

Deep group of returning players, newcomers driven by being sixth in coaches' preseason poll



Mike BABCOCK

YES, DOC SADLER HAS BROUGHT an up-tempo style of play to the Nebraska men's basketball team. And yes, enthusiasm is high at the Devaney Sports Center with the 2006-07 season at hand.

Husker women's coach Connie Yori appreciates that. "There is an energy in the gym right now," she said. "He's getting his kids to play hard. And we hope that carries over to our program."

Her team is going to play up-tempo this season, too, push the ball on offense and extend the defense. But no, she hasn't copied Sadler's style. That was her preference from the beginning. Implementing the system has just taken a while. She needed the talent, as well as the numbers.

Her fifth team has improved "from a talent standpoint," she said. It has a "dramatically" improved skill level, and improved conditioning. And "we've obviously improved our depth."

So if the Huskers can remain relatively healthy, "we feel like we can put, clearly, our best team on the floor in the last seven or eight years in Nebraska women's basketball," said Yori.

Health is the key, knock on wood. That's "always a big question mark," she said. With that qualification, "I feel like we're right on track to where I thought we would be and hoped to be in this program. We are now at a stage of our program where I'm calling it the 'growth' stage."

"And we're now in a stage where we feel like we can compete with Top-25 opponents."

Seniors Kiera Hardy and Chelsea Aubry form the team's foundation. This is the fourth year with Yori for both. That's important, said Yori, because "there's some continuity. They're going to bring good leadership for us. They're also players who have played at a very high level."

Hardy is a two-time, first-team all-conference selection and has received preseason All-America honorable mention, while Aubry, a Husker captain for a third consecutive season, has international experience, starting at power forward on the Canadian National Team.

"They're going to bring some stability to us," Yori said.

So will Jelena Spiric, another senior who missed last season because of a knee injury after transferring from junior college and earning Big 12 newcomer-of-the-year honors in 2005.

Five freshmen complement the returning players, providing "really a nice mix," said Yori.

Team chemistry is another plus, according to Kelsey Griffin, who started every game last season and was named the conference freshman of the year by the Dallas Morning News.

"I really believe we're a better practicing team, not only because it's been said, but in practice you can tell; it's fun," said Griffin, who had 35 points and 13 rebounds in a 122-55 exhibition victory against Nebraska-Kearney.

"It's not because the drills are different. It's because of the girls' attitudes."

Why that was so, Griffin doesn't have any idea. "I really wish I knew. Last year when we were trying to figure out why we were struggling as far as why we weren't having fun (in) practice, no one could put their finger on it," she said. "I think it's pretty much people's attitudes."

Those attitudes are based on setting "really high goals for ourselves this year. People can say it, but we also want to work hard to achieve it (success)," said Griffin.

Nebraska's goals include getting to the NCAA Tournament, something it hasn't done since the 1999-2000 season. The Huskers have advanced to the Women's National Invitation Tournament in each of the last three seasons, winning twice a year ago before losing to Kansas State.

The team also is driven by being sixth in the Big 12 coaches' preseason poll. Among the qualities identified in team leadership meetings, "what makes all our girls tick, is proving people wrong. We like to be able to, if someone says we can't do something, do it," Griffin said.

"If anything, this is just more motivation for us to do well this year."

The approach is different, said Griffin, "definitely, dramatically. We're really looking to push the ball. Every day in practice, Coach Yori asks us if we want to be a running team."

And the players respond, "Yes."

"We're really working on that, pushing the ball up the floor," she said, adding that Yori is "really passionate about it and really gets excited when we're doing the right things."

Doesn't the team always do things right?

"I wish I could say that," Griffin said.

Yori is comfortable with the new style of play, and her enthusiasm for it is infectious. "So it makes things even more fun, even though it's a lot more work," said Griffin. "She makes it fun."

Yes, Sadler has contributed to the Sports Center energy. But "we feel like we can put a great product on the floor (too)," Yori said. "And we hope that men's basketball fans will come out and watch us, as well as the women's basketball fans we already have watching us year in and year out." ■



Connie Yori's teams have played in three straight Women's NITs.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.

Unquestioned Leader

Young quarterback's experience vs. Texas carried over into offseason and 2006



Curt McKEEVER

TEXAS A&M, WHICH NEVER HAD a margin greater than six points in its first four Big 12 Conference games of 2006, looked plenty spectacular to Baylor coach Guy Morris.

"We were out-athleted, out-whooped," Morris said after A&M beat his club 31-21 in Waco, Texas, Oct. 28. "That's what the difference was."

You might be surprised to learn that the unquestioned leader of the Aggies' whoop brigade is Stephen McGee, a sophomore quarterback who spent last season backing up Reggie McNeal.

It was only because of an injury to McNeal that McGee started the final game of 2005. But in that loss to Texas, McGee set forth a determination that carried A&M to its first 8-1 start since 1998 — the year of the Aggies' Big 12 championship.

Against the eventual national champions, McGee rushed 24 times for 108 yards and two touchdowns and completed 9 of 23 passes for 83 yards. One of the most sought-after quarterbacks in the class of 2004, he allowed his experience against the Longhorns to carry over into offseason workouts.

"I don't know if I've ever had a sophomore take over leadership like he has," A&M coach Dennis Franchione said.

Franchione was heaping similar praise on his quarterback during a practice last spring, too. But frankly, McGee wasn't buying it. As a matter of fact, he thought that particular practice was starting to turn into a waste of time.

"Our offense was a little sluggish, and their defense was a little sluggish, and we both needed to pick it up," McGee said.

And so he decided he'd use the rule about the quarterback being hands-off to his advantage. At least that's how preseason All-Big 12 Conference linebacker Justin Warren recalls the situation.

"He came around the corner, throwing the ball. I was just going to run past him, and I seen in his eyes that he was going to try to lower his head and try to run over me," Warren said. "I just threw a little inside shoulder at him and fell on his face. He got up kind of mad and pushed me, and I pushed him back."

"As soon as I pushed him, the offense just rallied behind him. And the defense got behind me. It showed the team that we came together. There wasn't anybody fighting after that . . . really just rallying together."

Shortly before that play, McGee had told Franchione he didn't know what he could do to inspire the Aggies' defensive players — other than to make them mad.

"I said, 'If you gotta do that, you gotta do that,'" Franchione said.

It probably wasn't by accident, then, that 6-foot-3, 208-pound McGee ended up taking on the leader of the defense.

"When things start dragging, the competitive side of you will come out, and it did," McGee said. "Before you know it . . . prac-

tice wasn't sluggish from there on out. We played at our very highest."

Added Warren, who's 6-3 and 245 pounds: "I told him after practice I liked it. I liked his spirit and his attitude — just protect yourself when possible, because in Big 12, they hit, and they don't quit, week after week."

The Aggies needed to instill more of that relentless play after four straight losses at the end of last season left them with a 5-6 record. But in the final six quarters that he was running the offense, McGee showed a quick turnaround was possible. In 19 drives, he pushed the Aggies into scoring position 10 times.

With the knowledge that A&M would return seven starters, McGee planned on making a big splash early. He cited the players feeling a sense of urgency.

"We don't want to be 5-6. We expect more," he said. "The bar's set high, and we want to get there, so we have to do this thing together. That's our only hope."

Through A&M's first nine games, McGee had definitely held up his part. In 255 passes, he'd been picked off just once — giving him the nation's top attempts-to-interceptions ratio.

Against Baylor, McGee also rushed for 89 yards out of the Aggies' option attack that finished with a season-high 292 yards on the ground and 507 total. The previous week, McGee ran for 86 yards in an overtime win against Oklahoma State. And in the two games, he completed 29 of 47 passes for 407 yards and four touchdowns.

"They are tough to defend," said Morris, whose defense failed to come up with a takeaway for the first time this season. First of all, the guy's got a good arm, (and) they used the play action well. And you've got the two big tailbacks (freshman Mike Goodson and sophomore Jorvorskie Lane). They didn't hurt us, but it was McGee with the option.

"We hesitated, at times, when we should've been coming up and hitting him in the mouth. And we were a little confused on who had the quarterback, who had the pitch man, that kind of stuff. That's a lot to have to deal with, and then you have to throw in the physical factor, as well. They're a good offense."

The defense also was doing its part. After the Baylor game, the Aggies ranked 52nd in total defense, and during a four-game winning streak had given up only four second-half touchdowns. There are stiffer units in the Big 12, but a year ago, A&M was so porous (ranking 107th) that Franchione brought in three new defensive coaches.

Who wants to bet McGee had an impact on that turnaround, too?

"Their spirit, their feeling of team, their togetherness, I think is, by far, the defining adjective about this team," Franchione said. "They believe in each other, they enjoy each other, they have fun in practice, and they believe they'll find a way." ■



Stephen McGee had only one interception in his first 225 passes.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com

Spaghetti

Recruiting visit 'mishap' didn't change Taylor's mind about NU

By Mike Babcock

Even the best-laid plans can go awry. Consider... On his recruiting visit to Nebraska, Steve Taylor went to dinner with Steve Pederson, the Cornhuskers' recruiting coordinator at the time, at a Spaghetti Works restaurant.

During the dinner, spaghetti was spilled on Taylor, a blue-chip quarterback from San Diego's Lincoln High School. Pederson "was a little nervous," Taylor once recalled, understating no doubt.

"He was afraid I wasn't going to come."

But the mishap didn't dissuade Taylor, who had pretty much settled on Nebraska during the summer before his senior year in high school. The way he remembers it, on a drive to a football camp in Berkeley, Calif., his coach asked him what schools were at the top of his list.

Nebraska was among them, as were USC, UCLA and Washington.

The coach said he would be sure to send film of Taylor to those schools. About midway through his senior season, Nebraska called to tell Taylor that it planned to recruit only one scholarship quarterback, and he was at the top of the list. "I thought that was awesome," said Taylor.

Right then, he decided Nebraska

Tenth in a Series

"would be the school for me," he said. "So I played the latter part of my senior year knowing that I would most likely go to Nebraska."

He made other visits, but mostly for fun. Spaghetti or not, he would be a Husker.

Nebraska was only one season removed from the "Scoring Explosion" offense and an ill-fated attempt to go from the Associated Press preseason poll to after a bowl game ranked No. 1. Only a failed two-point conversion attempt, when a kick might have sufficed, prevented that from happening.

Despite the Orange Bowl disappointment, however, the Cornhuskers' stock remained high. And coach Tom Osborne was able to put together an outstanding recruiting class in 1985.

Taylor was a centerpiece of the class, not only because of his position but also because of what he did at Lincoln High, including breaking USC Heisman Trophy winner Marcus Allen's school record for total offense. Taylor's success there was such that the school retired his No. 3 jersey.

He broke the record by running as well as throwing. And some recruiters tried to convince him that if he went



to Nebraska, he wouldn't be given an opportunity to throw. But the Cornhuskers "threw the ball, in my

ti or Not



Some recruiters tried to convince Steve Taylor that if he went to Nebraska, he wouldn't be given an opportunity to throw.

Gill," wasn't the only member of the 1985 scholarship recruiting class to capture the imagination of Cornhusker fans. LeRoy Etienne and Broderick Thomas were similarly heralded for their defensive credentials.

Etienne, a linebacker from New Iberia, La., was a Parade magazine All-American and two-time Louisiana defensive player of the year. He ran the 40-yard dash in 4.7 seconds. And he was credited with an incredible 210 unassisted tackles during his senior season in high school.

Thomas, a defensive end at Houston's Madison High School who also had 4.7 speed, picked the Cornhuskers despite the best efforts of Oklahoma coach Barry Switzer. He might well have picked the Sooners had Switzer been willing to let him to play outside linebacker.

Thomas scheduled a visit to Oklahoma but canceled it. He wanted assurances that he could play outside linebacker and that he wouldn't be redshirted. Osborne wouldn't guarantee the latter. But, he said, Thomas would be given an opportunity to play as a freshman. And that was enough.

Even though freshmen could be redshirted, most at Nebraska played on the freshman-junior varsity before redshirting their second season before contributing as sophomores. Thomas was an exception, as were Etienne and Taylor. All three would earn varsity letters in 1985.

Thomas was the first to earn a promotion. "It was rough at first, but all the things I went through just made me better," he has said of his freshman season. Until his arrival, Nebraska called the position he played "defensive end," although he wasn't in a three-point stance, the way he would have been at Oklahoma. And the position was soon renamed "outside linebacker," anyway.

In any case, Thomas played in eight regular-season games as well as the Fiesta Bowl. He best was against Kansas State: nine tackles and one quarterback sack for a 12-yard loss.

Etienne played in three games with the freshman-junior varsity team, making 18 tackles (including 12 unassisted), before settling in with the varsity and appearing in three games.

Taylor played in four freshman-junior varsity games, completing 19-of-32 passes for 425 yards and five touchdowns, with only two interceptions, and rushing for 218 yards and seven touchdowns. He played in five regular-season varsity games, scoring touchdowns against Iowa State and Kansas.

His most notable performance, however, came in a 27-23 loss against Michigan in the Fiesta Bowl, specifically the fourth quarter of the game. The Cornhuskers led 14-3 at halftime but contributed to their own demise in the third

eyes," he said. After all, Turner Gill had been "a pretty good passer."

Taylor, who immediately was tagged "the next Turner



Huskers Illustrated the photo

LeRoy Etienne (47, above) and Broderick Thomas (right) used their defensive skills to earn varsity letters as freshmen in 1985.

quarter, when Michigan scored 24 unanswered points.

Early in the fourth quarter, Taylor replaced starter McCathorn Clayton and directed a comeback that finally ended with the interception of a desperation, third-down pass in the Michigan end zone with 28 seconds remaining. Taylor rushed for 76 yards in the quarter, on 10 carries.

He earned the starting job, with an outstanding spring as a freshman, and would direct the offense for the next three seasons, setting the school career record for rushing yards by a quarterback (2,125). As a senior, he rushed for 826 yards, averaging 5.3 per carry, and 13 touchdowns.

Thomas was a three-time, first-team all-conference selection and earned All-America honors in 1987 and 1988, when he also finished second in voting for the Butkus Award.

Ken Clark, the first football player from Omaha Bryan High School to earn a scholarship from Nebraska, was among several less-publicized members of the 1985 recruiting class

Recruiting list, 1985

Player, Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown	Letters
Tony Avant, SE	6-2	175	Omaha	
Richard Bell, WB	6-1	190	Altadena, Calif.	1987-88-89
Bill Bobbora, OG	6-4	248	Amarillo, Texas	1987-88-89
Bryan Carpenter, RB	5-10	200	Olathe, Kan.	1987-88-89
Greg Ching, DT	6-9	250	Castlewood, S.D.	
Ken Clark, RB	5-11	185	Omaha	1987-88-89
*Brian Davis, DB	6-3	195	Phoenix, Ariz.	1985-86
Steve DeShazer, LB	6-3	230	Kansas City, Mo.	
Chris Drennan, K	5-8	170	Cypress, Calif.	1987-88-89
LeRoy Etienne, LB	6-2	225	New Iberia, La.	1985-86-87-88
Trenton Flowers, DE	6-4	200	Omaha	
Greg Hinson, OL	6-4	260	Mt. Laurel, N.J.	
Kris Lamb, FB	6-2	198	Waxahachie, Texas	
Tim Moore, OL	6-5	290	Atwater, Calif.	
Chad Murrell, DB	6-5	190	Grand Island, Neb.	
Bump Novacek, TE	6-4	210	Gothenburg, Neb.	
Chris O'Gara, C	6-5	240	Madison, Wis.	1987-88-89
Cleo Rice, DE	6-3	240	Leavenworth, Kan.	
John Roschal, OL	6-3	265	Houston	1988-89
Marvin Sanders, DB	6-0	175	Markham, Ill.	1987-88-89
Sam Schmidt, FB	6-0	215	Wood River, Neb.	1987-88-89
Steve Taylor, QB	6-1	185	Spring Valley, Calif.	1985-86-87-88
Broderick Thomas, DE	6-4	235	Houston	1985-86-87-88
Ray Valladao, L	6-4	240	Atwater, Calif.	1987-88-89
Kent Wells, DT	6-5	285	Lincoln, Neb.	1987-88-89

State breakdown: Nebraska 7, California 5, Texas 4, Kansas 2, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, South Dakota, Wisconsin.

*Junior college transfer

to have productive careers. He emerged as the starting I-back in his junior season and became the second-leading rusher in school history, behind only 1983 Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier.

The soft-spoken Clark rushed for 3,037 yards and 29 touchdowns during his career. His most memorable game was against Oklahoma State his junior season, when he rushed for 256 yards and three touchdowns, going head-to-head with Heisman Trophy winner Barry Sanders.

Nebraska jumped ahead 35-0 in the first quarter and increased the lead to 42-0 on Clark's third touchdown less than 4 minutes into the second quarter, before the Cowboys mounted a comeback attempt. Sanders rushed for 189 yards and four touchdowns. But that wasn't nearly enough. Nebraska won 63-42, with Taylor accounting for five touchdowns, three by rushing and two by passing.

The 1985 recruiting class contributed to Osborne's three national championships in his final four seasons as coach by showing him that young players could have an impact, according to Taylor. "I think once he saw that, 'Hey, I've got all this talent, why not let them play for four years

versus two or three at the most," Taylor said. "I think there was a natural progression with Coach Osborne and his ability to relate to guys like Broderick (Thomas), LeRoy (Etienne) and Charles Fryar.

Fryar, a defensive back from Burlington, N.J., walked on in 1984, redshirted and played with the freshman-junior varsity in 1985 before becoming a starter in the secondary.

Those players "were young and confident and wanted to say it," said Taylor.

Osborne "grew, in my opinion, as far as relating and motivating players from all walks of life," Taylor said. "I think he knew he had to treat Broderick differently or Turner (Gill) or Tommie (Frazier) or Lawrence

Phillips or Scott Frost or Eric (Crouch), whoever it might be."

His class also helped Osborne acknowledge that the program's goal was winning the national championship, something no one in the program talked about publicly at the time.

"It became more and more of a focus. It became more and more, 'It's OK to have that goal,'" said Taylor. "So I just think it was a natural progression." And when Nebraska finally won a national championship under Osborne, "I felt I was a part of it."

For an instant during his recruiting visit that probably seemed a longshot. But his mind was made up, and a little spilled spaghetti sauce wasn't going to change anything. ■

HUSKER FANS

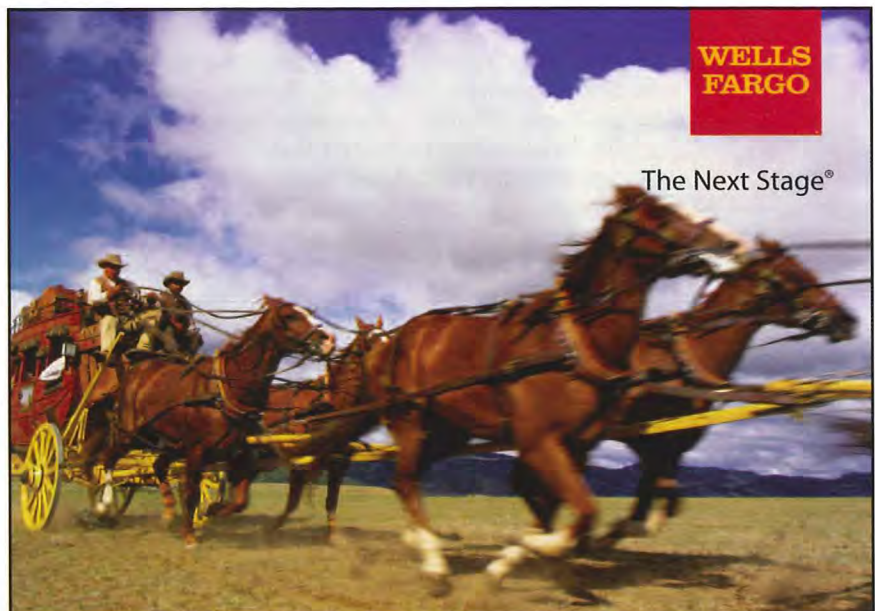
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Not So Typical

Murtha doesn't totally fit mold for offensive linemen

By Terry Douglass

#76 LYDON MURTHA
SOPHOMORE TACKLE

Numerous stereotypes are often applied to offensive linemen. Nebraska's Lydon Murtha doesn't fit many of them.

With the exception of the fact that he's one very large individual — 6-foot-7 and 315 pounds — it seems that Murtha breaks often from the mold of what one might assume about a Cornhusker offensive tackle.

"That's probably right," Murtha said. "When you think of an offensive lineman, you probably think of a Harley-Davidson type of guy. I guess I'm kind of different."

"The hardest people sometimes have a soft side."

Don't get the wrong idea here. It's not like Murtha is amassing a large teddy bear collection or anything. In addition to being a bit of a movie buff, the redshirt sophomore loves the outdoors and some of his other hobbies include running, biking and shooting guns.

OK, so maybe Murtha is starting to sound more like your typical offensive lineman after all.

He is one very active offensive lineman. For his next spring break, Murtha is planning on a hiking trip to Yellowstone National Park.

"Spring break is supposed to be a relaxing time, but I wouldn't mind going out there and doing some river rafting and stuff like that," Murtha said. "I guess you could say I'm pretty active."

"I'm just a big nature guy. I like the outdoors. I like see-

ing different things that the outdoors has to offer and all that."

One thing is for certain: You probably won't ever see a larger guy on a mountain bike. Rest assured, Murtha's two-wheeler didn't come off the rack.

"They make frames for my size, but they get pretty expensive, and I have a pretty nice mountain bike that was made for me," Murtha said. "It's something I really cherish. It's nice."

Shooting and collecting guns also rank as one of Murtha's loves. He has a hunting trip tentatively planned after Nebraska completes its regular season, but admits that for him, hunting is mostly about the firearms.

"Some guys are big hunters, but I'm more into just collecting different guns and stuff like that," Murtha said. "Most people think that when you collect guns that you're going to go kill people and stuff, but I just like the whole aspect of collecting guns."

Murtha said he probably also differs from many of his teammates on the offensive line in the way he was raised. His father, Bill Murtha, was a military man who took a no-nonsense approach to parenting.

"It was not overly strict, but probably stricter than some families just because my dad was in the military," Murtha said. "It was good, though. My dad's great — the smartest guy I know, and he's my best friend, too. We get along really well."

Although it's difficult to compare being on the Nebraska football team to serving in the military, Murtha



Scott Bruhn

believes that leaving home in Hutchinson, Minn., to live hundreds of miles away and play football in Lincoln has had a pronounced effect on him.

"It's kind of like how they say being in the military can change a person, I feel like football has done that a lot for me," Murtha said. "It has matured me more than I could've ever imagined. I've become a more mature person, and I've become stronger mentally as well as physically."

On the field, college football has also been a learning experience for Murtha. Ranked as the nation's No. 1 offensive tackle prospect by ESPN recruiting analyst Tom Lemming in 2004, Murtha admits that he had plenty to learn when he arrived on campus.

"College football and high school football are like night and day," Murtha said. "Some players can come into college football and contribute right away, but that rarely happens at the tackle position. The college game is more physical, and the speed is just phenomenally different."

"Here, technique is critical. In high school, you can get away with taking

200-pound linemen and just blowing them up, but here, everyone is good, so it's less about your strength and more about technique."

Murtha's early development was slowed by a leg injury suffered early in fall camp of his true freshman year in 2004, and he eventually redshirted. Last year, he played in nine games, including three starts at left tackle.

While Murtha had yet to start through nine games this season, he has seen plenty of playing time as Nebraska's swing tackle, spelling both starting left tackle Chris Patrick and starting right tackle Matt Slauson.

Switching between the left and right sides can be difficult for some, but Murtha said he's had no problems adapting — even though each position requires a different mental approach. He said left tackle requires more exact technique, while right tackle demands playing with a more aggressive, physical nature.

Nebraska offensive line coach Dennis Wagner said he's encouraging Murtha to add more aggressiveness — maybe even a hint of nastiness to his play.

"As he develops that mentality,

that will make a difference," Wagner said. "It hasn't ignited yet. As a coach, it's my job to draw it out of him."

While Murtha strives to increase his intensity, he said plays football to have fun.

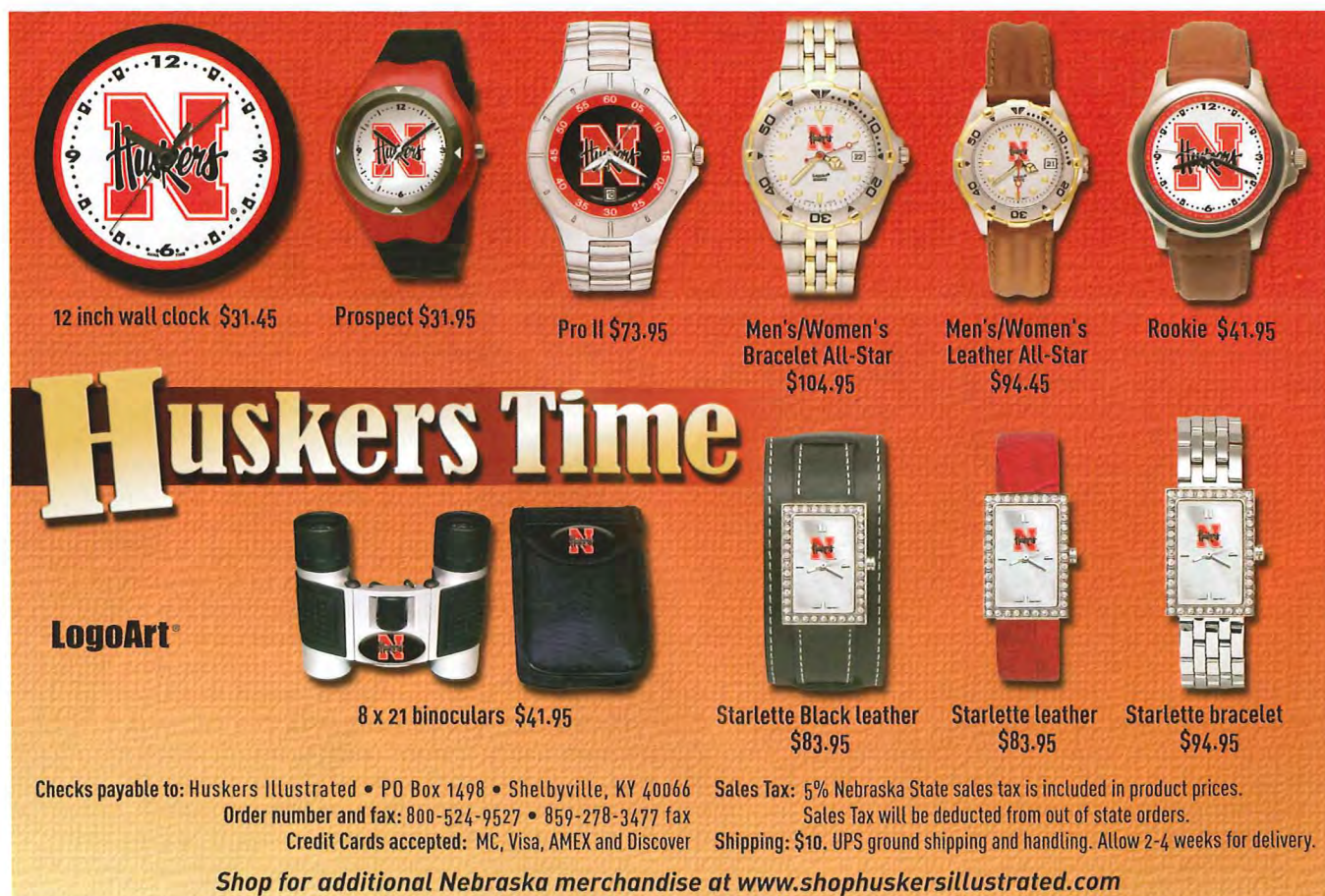
"When I go out on the field, I jump around. I don't yell, I don't scream — I talk a little bit, but that's about it," Murtha said. "I'm not calm, but I'm not angry and going crazy. Sometimes, you can get so hyped up that you'll go out on the field, forget what you're going and make mistakes."

While Murtha would obviously like to get into the starting lineup, he said his focus is on practicing hard and being ready any time he's needed.

"I can't really say if I'm frustrated or not," Murtha said. "Obviously, everyone on this team wants to play as much as they can."

"Until it's my time to go, I'm just going to keep doing what I've been doing. The coaches tell me that if I keep working like that, I'm going to get to play a lot of ball here." ■

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the *Grand Island (Neb.) Independent*. He can be reached at terry.douglass@charter.net.



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10 QUESTIONS



Scott Bruhn

The pass was "a tight spiral," Jake Wesch said. "It looked OK."

That should have come as no surprise, really. After all, he played quarterback in high school.

But "to be honest, I really didn't care how it looked as long as it got to him," said Wesch.

"Him" referred to tight end Hunter Teafatiller, who caught the pass for a touchdown.

"I just had to make sure we got the first down," Wesch said. "That was my part."

Wesch was the holder for what appeared to be a Jordan Congdon field goal attempt on Nebraska's first possession against Kansas State earlier this season. The Cornhuskers faced fourth-and-8 at the Kansas State 17-yard line. Instead of setting the ball down, however, getting the laces away from Congdon and leaning it slightly toward himself, Wesch picked it up and passed it, as he was supposed to.

The trick play caught Kansas State off-guard. "A lot of people ask me what was going through my head when I saw him (Teafatiller) open. I really don't remember," said Wesch.

"It was one of those things . . . I guess it's kind of like muscle memory; we did it so much (in practice). You don't have a lot of time to think about it. If you did, you might screw up."

If you had a CD player and only three CDs to play, what three would you pick?

"The first one would be John Legend; James Blunt and let's see . . . I'm trying to think what I have in my car right now, probably T.I. John Legend is kind of R&B, soul. It relaxes me. It's what I listen to before games."

Britney Spears or Jessica Simpson?

"Jessica. Britney's got a couple of kids. I don't know if I could handle kids right now."

If someone came to visit you in North Bend, what would you show them?

"There's not a lot. I guess I'd maybe show them the high

with
JAKE WESCH

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school. A lot of the guys on the team can't believe I came from that small of a school, so I'd show them that. And, I guess, I'd take them out to the house. My dad farms corn and soybeans, and a lot of guys are completely oblivious to that."

If your life were made into a movie, who would you pick to play the part of you?

"I'd like to say Brad Pitt, but I don't know, maybe Mel Gibson. Brad has good looks, but Mel Gibson's a good actor."

What's the best book you've ever read?

"I like 'The Five People You Meet in Heaven.' I've got 'Tuesdays with Morrie,' too. They're both real good books. I like him (Mitch Albom) a lot."

What's the toughest class you've taken at the university?

"There are a couple. Spanish is one of those things you have to be on top of. There's a lot of dialogue. It's not too tough, but you have to be on top of it. I took it two years in high school, and I'm just trying to refresh my memory. And then accounting, I guess, is pretty tough."

When you cook for yourself, what's your specialty?

"I like grilling steaks. My personal choice is not over-doing it too much just so it doesn't get too tough, a quality steak. I'm more of a medium-rare type of guy. It's something my dad did. He told me when I was younger that's the best way to have it. So that's what I do."

Sky diving, bungee jumping or rock climbing?

"I'd try sky diving, I guess. I don't know, out of those three, I think it would be the most rush. You free-fall for an extended period of time. Bungee jumping would go so quick."

What do you remember about the first game you ever saw at Memorial Stadium?


"I was so young, I don't remember. I was fortunate to come at least once a year, sometimes a couple of times. I remember being that little kid. I thought the players were like gods. It's still weird for me to look at myself, and I'm actually one of them now. I'm doing things I never thought were imaginable, just hanging on for the ride. I'm sure there are kids looking at me that same way. That's why I try to do as much community stuff as possible because I remember what it was like. So I try to get out and talk to kids as much as I can."

Do you feel any extra pressure coming from a small town?

"I don't see it as pressure at all. I've had so much support from my family and the community. It's definitely not pressure. It's something that keeps you more motivated. It's nice to go back and people talk to you about football. It definitely keeps me motivated, keeps me striving. It's a great feeling. I'm just fortunate to be here, fortunate to have such loyal people supporting me." ■

Nebraska 34

Mizzou 20



Nebraska wide receiver Nate Swift goes high over Missouri's Cornelius Brown to haul in a 34-yard pass from Zac Taylor at the Tiger 2 on the second play of the fourth quarter. Brandon Jackson scored on the next play to put the Huskers on top 34-13. (Photo by Scott Bruhn)

A Better C

Passer Purify credits Nunn for 'a great play'

By Mike Babcock
Photos: Scott Bruhn

The play was set up perfectly. Nebraska ran a reverse with Terrence Nunn running to his left for an 18-yard gain. Then, on the next play, it ran a reverse with Maurice Purify to the right, except that instead of turning up the field, Purify pulled up and passed to Nunn in the end zone, 28 yards.

Nunn had slipped past strong safety David Overstreet and made a diving catch.

"Mo Purify can throw a great ball; I'll tell you that," coach Bill Callahan said with a laugh. "He's going to have to challenge Zac Taylor a little bit for that position (quarterback)."

Purify joked that he might have to try to supplant Taylor.

"My QB rating is better than his," he said. Even so, "I kind of felt like I threw it out of bounds. T. Nunn made a great play. It was a better catch than pass."

Whether the catch was better than the throw made little difference in the scheme of things. The touchdown, with 1:30 remaining in the first quarter, made it a 10-0 advantage.

The Cornhuskers continued their fast start barely a minute into the second quarter when Taylor teamed with Purify on a 7-yard touchdown pass, to cap a six-play, 22-yard possession set up by defensive end Adam Carriker's interception of a deflected Chase Daniel pass.

Purify was double-covered. Just before the snap, "I could see that safety cheating over," said Taylor. "So you knew it was going to be two-on-one over there. It makes you a little bit nervous throwing into two-on-one coverage. But Mo did a great job of getting off the press, and I just threw it up to where he could have a shot at it. He's so big, he's going to out-jump anybody."

Purify is 6-foot-4 and 210 pounds. "It's nice to know going into every week that I'm going to be taller and bigger than the DBs," he said. "Zac always takes advantage of the one-on-one."

Or, in this case, two-on-one. "It was hard work," Purify said.



Terrence Nunn stretches out to haul in a 28-yard touchdown pass from fellow wide receiver Maurice Purify in the first quarter.

WORTH ANOTHER LOOK

Before the quarter was over, Nebraska had turned another Missouri miscue into a touchdown. Linebacker Bo Ruud intercepted a Daniel pass and returned it to the Tiger 17-yard line, from where, on the first play of the possession, Taylor tossed a pass to tight end Hunter Teafatiller.

That was all the Cornhuskers needed, although they responded to a Missouri touchdown late in the third quarter by driving 85 yards on 13 plays for a final score, with I-back Brandon Jackson going in from the 2-yard line. The

atch?



key play of the series was a 34-yard pass from Taylor to Nate Swift, on third-and-14 from the Missouri 36, one of Nebraska's 11 conversions on 17 third-down attempts.

That statistic, as much as any other, reflected the Cornhuskers' play on offense, which Callahan described as the best as far as execution was concerned since last season's 30-3 victory at Colorado. "I think it was more complete in that respect, and against a quality opponent," he said.

Jackson rushed for more than 100 yards in a second consecutive game, carrying a career-high 32 times. Purify gladly would have taken the carry from the 2-yard line. "I wanted to line up at I-back and jump over the line of scrimmage, get me a touchdown," he said. ■

REPORT CARD

RUSHING OFFENSE

The game plan included a heavy dose of running, which stood to reason; Missouri ranked eighth in the Big 12 against the run. "I thought we did a good job of doing that," Callahan said. "Our line provided some excellent blocking. There were some good holds and some hard running. We were seeing a lot of eight-man box, nine-man box and we just tried to keep pushing, keep pestering, find some holes for our backs." Brandon Jackson had a game-high 111 yards. Two lost fumbles were a negative, however. ★★☆☆

PASSING OFFENSE

Taylor was efficient, completing 13-of-21 passes for 208 yards and two touchdowns, with I-backs Marlon Lucky and Jackson the leading receivers. Plus, wide receiver Maurice Purify threw a touchdown pass to Terrence Nunn. "Everybody's trying to take my job," said Taylor. ★★☆☆

RUSHING DEFENSE

Missouri rushed for a relatively quiet 119 yards, with only 7 coming in the first quarter, allowing the Cornhuskers to get off to a fast start. ★★☆☆

PASSING DEFENSE

Quarterback Chase Daniel completed 20-of-38 passes for 244 yards and two touchdowns, but he also was intercepted twice. Containing him was no small task. He went into the game ranked second in the conference in total offense. "I thought we played good team defense," said Callahan. "The coverage was tight, the rush was good. We just wanted to keep him moving his feet, not allow him to settle in, set his feet and make good decisions. I thought our (pass) rush provided some great complements to what we were doing in our coverage game." ★★☆☆

SPECIAL TEAMS

One week after Callahan described Nebraska's special-teams play as a "complete collapse and meltdown," he praised it. "I really was encouraged by the way they responded in coverage," he said. "I just think overall we did a better job." ★★☆☆

NUMBERS

Cornhusker quarterback Zac Taylor wasn't sacked, after being sacked 13 times in the three previous games. Holding Missouri "sack-less" was huge, coach Bill Callahan said. "We didn't want to allow them to get in the game and start having a blitz-fest against our protection game."

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NEBRASKA-MISSOURI NOTES

RECORD-TYING 20

Cornhusker quarterback Zac Taylor threw a pair of touchdown passes to increase his season's total to 20, tying the school record set by Vince Ferragamo in 1976. Tying the record "says a lot about the type of offense we have going on here," said Taylor. "I'm not throwing to myself out there. Guys are catching the ball, and the offensive line is giving me plenty of time. It's great any time you get to be in the Nebraska record book because there's a lot of tradition. It means a lot to me and the whole offense."

Taylor's 39 career touchdown passes are four short of the school record, held by Tommie Frazier. Taylor continued to close in on his school single-season record for passing yardage, throwing for 208 to increase his total to 2,273. He threw for 2,653 yards last season. His career total of 4,926 passing yards is just 109 shy of the school record (5,035) held by Dave Humm (1972-74).

NOT THE ONLY ONE

Taylor isn't the only Cornhusker to throw a touchdown pass this season. In addition to Joe Ganz, his back-up, I-back Marlon Lucky and place-kicker (and holder) Jake Wesch had thrown touchdown passes going into the game. And wide receiver Maurice Purify joined the list. Plus, punter Dan Titchener completed a 28-yard pass against Southern California.

"Teams have to watch that on film and be aware of it," Taylor said.

HAPPY HOMECOMING

For what it's worth, the Missouri game was Homecoming. The Cornhuskers have won 37 of the last 38 Homecoming games, after losing against Texas Tech last season. The victory was Nebraska's 15th in a row against Missouri at Memorial Stadium, dating to the 1978 game, a 35-31 upset.

MUTUAL ADMIRATION

Coach Bill Callahan credited the offensive line for its play, as did Taylor and I-back Brandon Jackson. "Coach trusts those guys, and I trust those guys to get on their blocks and just help me spring out," said Jackson, who rushed for a game-high 111 yards on 32 carries.

Sophomore Andy Christensen, who started at guard for the second time this season, returned the compliment. "We have a lot of really great running backs here at Nebraska, and it's just our job to go out there and make sure they can run," he said. "We take a lot of pride in being able to do that."

In addition, "credit goes to Brandon for playing the way he did," Christensen said.

THREE FOR 'TEAF'

Sophomore walk-on tight end Hunter Teafatiller caught his third touchdown pass of the season, a position high, teaming with Taylor on a 17-yarder. Each of those passes has been thrown by someone different. Joe Ganz threw the first. And Jake Wesch threw the second.

Teafatiller credited weakside linebacker Bo Ruud, however. Ruud intercepted a Chase Daniel pass and returned it 40 yards to the Missouri 17. Ruud "really did an excellent job of creating a score for the offense by intercepting that pass," said Teafatiller. "It was a heads-up play."

"And it really put us in a good position to get a touchdown. We just finished it."

He also credited the coaches for having a "great game plan. They had a great plan for all of us tight ends," he said. Also, "I have to give credit to J.B. (Phillips) and Matt (Herian) and all of the tight ends because they all did a good job."

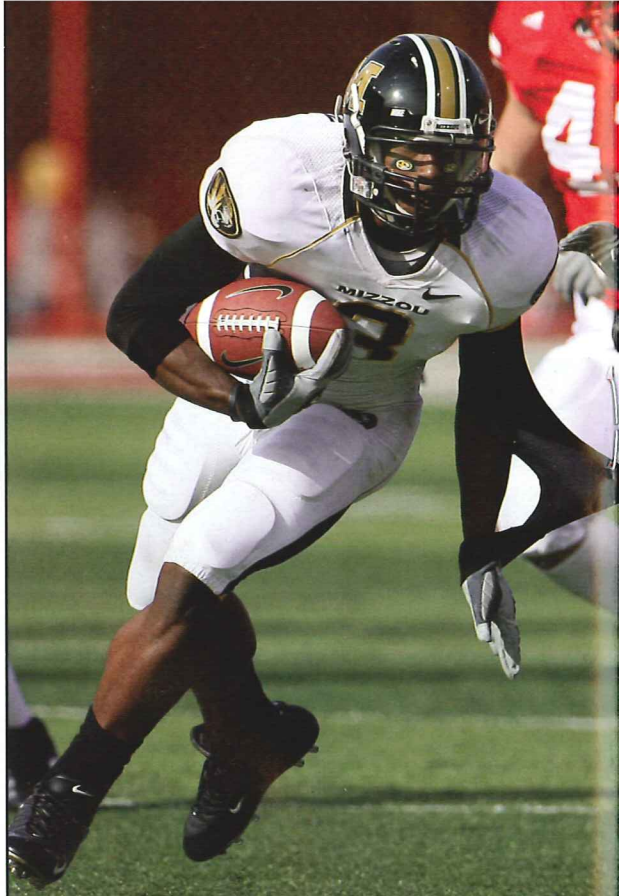
Herian, Phillips and Josh Mueller have caught two touchdown passes each.

DEALING WITH DANIEL

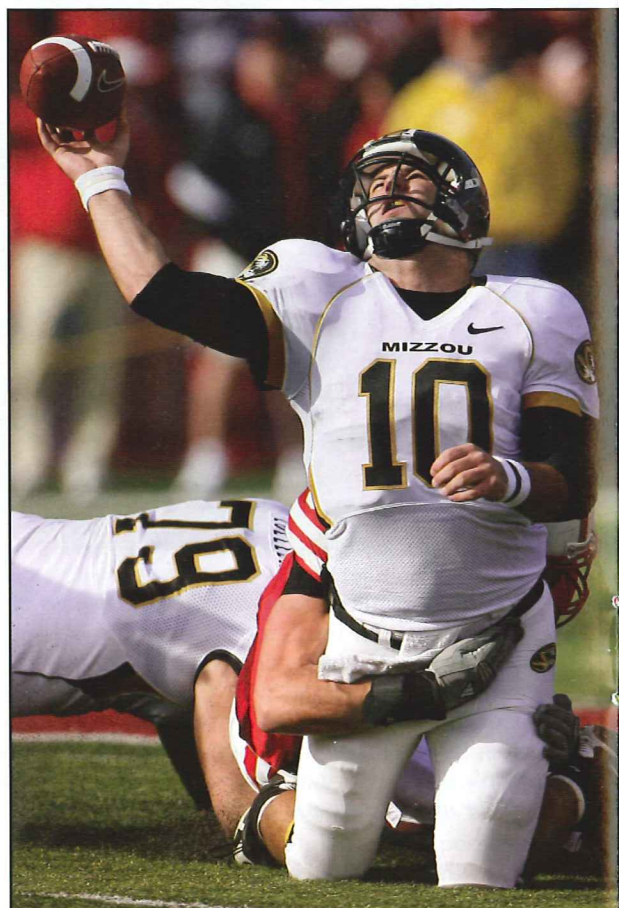
Nebraska's defensive game plan included trying to keep Tiger quarterback Chase Daniel from throwing on the run, when he's most effective. "Well, he's not perfect," said Missouri coach Gary Pinkel. "When he misses a throw, we kind of look at each other and say, 'What's wrong with Chase?' because he is so accurate. (He) just got out of sync a little bit, and it wasn't just Chase."

Protection was down a little bit. We didn't run the ball as well. We had some three-and-outs. He had two tipped footballs that were intercepted, obviously, and resulted in 14 direct points. Chase is going to continue to grow and become a great player. He competed to the end to try and give us a chance to win."

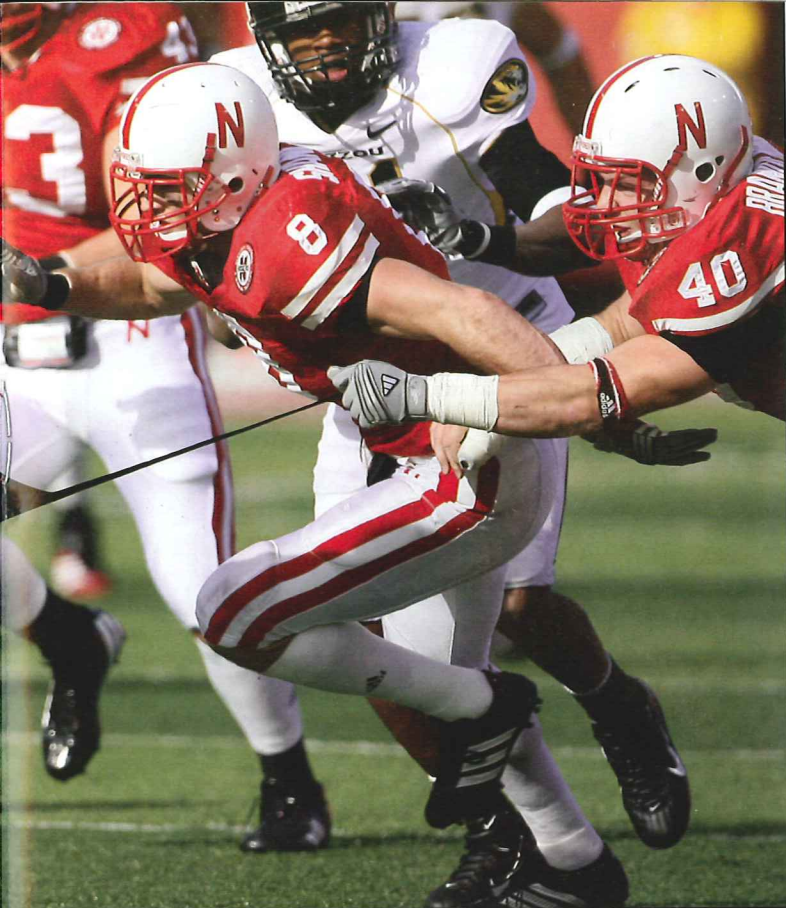
Daniel broke Missouri's single-season passing yardage record in the game. Jeff Handy held the record at 2,463 yards. Daniel now has 2,531 passing yards through 10 games. ■



Nebraska linebacker Lance Brandenburg (40) holds on to Missouri's Bo Ruud (8) moves in.



MU quarterback Chase Daniel (10) is sacked by NU's Bo Ruud before he can get the pass off in the fourth quarter. The play was originally ruled a completed pass, but was overturned.



Missouri wide receiver William Franklin (3) by a thread, as teammate Andrew Shanle



Nebraska wide receiver Maurice Purify grabs a 7-yard touchdown pass from Zac Taylor early in the second quarter.

Who Stood Out?

OFFENSE

Offensive line coach Dennis Wagner made some adjustments with Austin in street clothes. True freshman Jacob Hickman got his first career start at right guard, with sophomore Andy Christensen getting his second start at left guard. Sophomore Lydon Murtha started for the first time this season at left tackle, while Matt Slauson and Brett Byford were in their usual positions, right tackle and center.



Jacob Hickman

"We're really proud of their efforts," Callahan said. "The job that Coach (Dennis) Wagner did with the offensive line was just outstanding."

DEFENSE

Junior weakside linebacker Bo Ruud didn't come off the field. He was credited with seven tackles, including a sack for a 13-yard loss. He forced a fumble, recovered a fumble and intercepted a pass, returning it 40 yards to the Missouri 17-yard line to set up the Cornhuskers' third touchdown.



Bo Ruud

"I almost don't want to think about it," he said when asked why he hadn't scored on the play. "I used to be a good running back. I don't know what happened to me."

With McKeon out of the game, Ruud and junior Lance Brandenburg were responsible for making the check calls, and "they didn't miss one," said Cosgrove.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Sophomore Jordan Congdon, who saw his career extra-point string snapped at Oklahoma State got back on track, going four-for-four and kicking two field goals, of 40 yards and 33 yards. "It was encouraging to see Jordan Congdon bounce back," Callahan said.



Jordan Congdon

Injury Report

Senior offensive guard Greg Austin didn't play after suffered a knee sprain against Oklahoma State. He should be able to return before season's end. "There's a good chance we could have him back for the Colorado game," said Callahan.

Linebackers Corey McKeon and Steve Octavien also were held out because of injuries, McKeon an ankle and knee, Octavien an ankle and hamstring. Both were "ready to play," defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Kevin Cosgrove said. "But the extra rest will really pay off for them."

GAME STATS

SCORING

Nov. 4, 2006
Memorial Stadium Lincoln, Neb.
Attendance 85,197

	1	2	3	4	F
Missouri	0	6	7	7	20
Nebraska	10	17	0	7	34

First Quarter

	MU	NU
NU Congdon 40-yard Field Goal 04:53	0	3
Drive: 10 plays 66 yds 4:53		

NU Nunn Pass from Purify 28-yards (Congdon Kick) 01:30	0	10
Drive: 4 plays 58 yds 1:30		

Second Quarter

NU Purify Pass from Taylor 7-yards (Congdon Kick) 13:44	0	17
Drive: 6 plays 22 yds 2:15		

MU Wolfert 26-yard Field Goal 09:58	3	17
Drive: 9 plays 70 yds 3:37		

NU Teafatiller Pass from Taylor 17-yards (Congdon Kick) 05:04	3	24
Drive: 1 plays 17 yds 0:29		

NU Congdon 33-yard Field Goal 01:18	3	27
Drive: 6 plays 33 yds 2:34		

MU Wolfert 54-yard Field Goal 00:00	6	27
Drive: 6 plays 45 yds 1:06		

Third Quarter

MU Rucker Pass from Daniel 6-yards (Wolfert Kick) 05:46	13	27
Drive: 10 plays 62 yds 3:25		

Fourth Quarter

NU Jackson 2-yard Run (Congdon kick) 14:36	13	34
Drive: 24 plays 85 yards 06:00		

MU Coffman Pass from Daniel 19-yards (Wolfert kick) 08:10	20	34
Drive: 18 plays 80 yards 06:20		

TEAM STATS

	MU	NU
Total First Downs	21	20
Rushing	8	8
Passing	13	11
Penalty	0	1
Rushing Attempts	32	47
Yards Gained Rushing	146	195
Yards Lost Rushing	27	12
Net Yards Rushing	119	183
Net Yards Passing	244	236
Passes Attempted	38	22
Passes Completed	20	14
Had Intercepted	2	0
Percent Completion	52.6%	63.6%
Yards per Attempt	6.4	10.7
Yards per Completion	12.2	16.9
Total Offensive Plays	70	69
Total Net Yards	363	419
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.2	6.1
Fumbles: No-Lost	1-1	2-2
Penalties: No-Yards	2-15	3-19
Punts: No-Yards	4-156	2-73
Avg. Per Punt	39.0	36.5
Avg. Net Punt	33.0	36.5
Punt Returns: No-Yards	0-0	3-24
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	4-59	3-61
Interception Returns: No-Yards	0-0	2-37
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	1-7
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	24:49	35:11
Third-Down Conversions	3-13	11-17
Percentage	23.1%	64.7%
Fourth-Down Conversions	3-4	0-1
Percentage	75.0%	0.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	0-0	1-13



Nebraska linebacker Bo Ruud (51) takes off on a 40-yard return of a pass interception in the second quarter.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

MISSOURI

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Temple	18	106	7	99	5.5	0	24
Daniel	9	33	20	13	1.4	0	16
Goldsmith	5	7	0	7	1.4	0	2
Total	20	118	7	111	5.5	0	24

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Daniel	38	20	52.6	2	244	2	49
Total	38	20	52.6	2	244	2	49

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Alexander	4	84	0	49
Franklin	4	50	0	23
Rucker	4	31	1	11
Coffman	2	36	1	19
Ekwerekwu	2	18	0	13
Perry	2	16	0	10
Ray	1	6	0	6
Saunders	1	3	0	3
Total	20	244	2	49

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Goldsmith	3	47	0	17
Jackson	1	12	0	12
Total	4	59	0	17

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Crossett	4	39.0	46	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	4	39.0	46	0	0	0	0	0	1

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Terrell	8	2	10	1-2	0-0	0	0	0
Harrington	8	2	10	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bacon	3	3	6	1-1	0-0	0	0	0
Christopher	3	3	6	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Massey	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Sulak	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	1	1-0
Hood	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Moore	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Williams	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Overstreet	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	2	2	4	2-2	0-0	0	0	0
Jackson	1	3	4	1-1	0-0	0	0	1-0
Chavis	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Weatherspoon	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

NEBRASKA

	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Jackson	32	121	10	111	3.5	1	13
Lucky	12	46	2	44	3.7	0	8
Nunn	2	21	0	21	10.5	0	18
Taylor	1	7	0	7	7.0	0	7
Total	47	195	12	183	3.9	1	18

	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Taylor	21	13	61.9	0	208	2	47
Purify	1	1	100.0	0	28	1	28
Total	22	14	63.6	0	236	3	47

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Lucky	4	46	0	26
Jackson	3	61	0	47
Nunn	2	35	1	28
Swift	2	56	0	34
Purify	2	21	1	14
Teafatiller	1	17	1	17
Total	14	236	3	47

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Grixby	3	24	0	12
Total	3	24	0	12

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Lucky	3	61	0	32
Total	3	61	0	32

	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener	2	36.5	41	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	2	36.5	41	0	0	0	0	0	1

	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Congdon	2	2	40	0
Total	2	2	40	0

	Solo	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Ruud	5	2	7	1-13	1-13	0	1	1-7
Shanle	5	1	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Green	5	1	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Culbert	4	2	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Moore	3	3	6	3-8	0-0	0	0	0
Grixby	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Brandenburgh	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Jones	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Dagunduro	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Turner	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Carriker	2	0	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Wesch	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Bradley	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Suh	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Steinkuhler	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Erickson	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Eisenhart	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Kadavy	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Cryer	0	1	1	1-1	0-0	0	0	0

	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Ruud	1	40	0	40
Carriker	1	-3	0	0
Total	2	37	0	40

2006 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

	G	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Jackson, Brandon	10	125	720	25	695	5.6	6	48	69.5
Lucky, Marlon	10	100	592	25	567	5.7	6	51	56.7
Glenn, Cody	8	65	350	5	345	5.3	6	36	43.1
Wilson, Kenny	9	69	328	15	313	4.5	3	30	34.8
Nunn, Terrence	10	3	21	0	21	7.0	0	18	2.1
Hardy, Frantz	10	3	16	2	14	4.7	0	13	1.4
Ganz, Joe	3	2	10	12	-2	-1.0	0	10	-0.7
Taylor, Zac	10	39	93	143	-50	-1.3	1	24	-5.0

PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Taylor, Zac	10	252	156	61.9	3	2273	20	78	227.3
Ganz, Joe	3	12	6	50.0	0	93	2	31	31.0
Purify, Maurice	10	1	1	100.0	0	28	1	28	2.8
Titchener, Dan	10	1	1	100.0	0	28	0	28	2.8
Lucky, Marlon	10	1	1	100.0	0	25	1	25	2.5
Wesch, Jake	7	1	1	100.0	0	17	1	17	2.4

RECEIVING

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Purify, Maurice	10	25	503	20.1	6	63	50.3
Nunn, Terrence	10	30	472	15.7	2	75	47.2
Hardy, Frantz	10	12	273	22.8	3	78	27.3
Swift, Nate	10	15	272	18.1	1	49	27.2
Jackson, Brandon	10	18	237	13.2	1	49	23.7
Lucky, Marlon	10	20	216	10.8	0	26	21.6
Peterson, Todd	10	10	153	15.3	1	31	15.3
Herian, Matt	10	12	150	12.5	2	36	15.0
Phillips, J.B.	10	12	75	6.2	2	10	7.5
Teafatiller, Hunter	10	3	63	21.0	3	29	6.3
Mueller, Josh	10	4	21	5.2	2	8	2.1
Senske, Matt	3	2	13	6.5	1	12	4.3
Todd, Dane	10	2	9	4.5	1	8	0.9
Erickson, Dan	10	1	7	7.0	0	7	0.7

PUNT RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Nunn, Terrence	10	18	153	8.5	0	31	15.3
Grixby, Courtney	10	6	60	10.0	0	16	6.0
Swift, Nate	10	3	50	16.7	0	33	5.0

KICKOFF RETURNS LEADERS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Jackson, Brandon	10	5	101	20.2	0	24	10.1
Lucky, Marlon	10	4	71	17.8	0	32	7.1
Green, Tierre	10	3	59	19.7	0	23	5.9
Hardy, Frantz	10	3	49	16.3	0	22	4.9
Wilson, Kennv	9	2	42	21.0	0	27	4.7

PUNTING

G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In	20
Titchener, Dan	10	45	39.5	58	0	2	21	5	17

FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Congdon, Jordan	10	7	5	40	0

DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Bradley, Stewart	10	31	26	57	2-11	0-0	1	2	3
Green, Tierre	10	32	22	54	0-1	0-0	1	0	1
Ruud, Bo	10	29	24	53	4-31	2-23	1	3	1
Jones, Andre	10	33	16	49	0-1	0-0	6	0	0
McKeon, Corey	9	22	21	43	2-6	0-0	2	1	1
Shanley, Andrew	10	33	10	43	0-0	0-0	2	0	1
Carriker, Adam	10	17	18	35	8-30	3-17	3	0	0
Grixby, Courtney	10	28	7	35	0-0	0-0	8	1	1
Brandenburg, L	10	16	16	32	2-7	0-1	0	1	0
Moore, Jay	10	16	16	32	9-55	4-33	3	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total First Downs	208	184
Rushing	96	66
Passing	102	109
Penalty	10	9
Total Net Yards	4350	3421
Total Plays	679	650
Yards Per Play	6.4	5.3
Yards Per Game	435.0	342.1
Rushing Attempts-Yards	411-1886	315-1202
Yards Per Attempt	4.6	3.8
Yards Per Game	188.6	120.2
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	268-166-3	335-179-11
Passing Yards	2464	2219
Yards Per Completion	14.8	12.4
Yards Per Game	246.4	221.9
Punting: No.-Avg.	45-39.5	57-39.9
Fumbles-Lost	19-12	27-11
Penalties-Yards	50-432	56-401
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	18-146	20-155
Third-Down Conversions	67-140	45-138
Conversion Pct.	47.9	32.6
Fourth-Down Conversions	9-13	9-20
Conversion Pct.	69.2	45.0
Avg. Time Of Possession	32:45	27:15

Scoring

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
Nebraska	96	100	42	97	7	342
Opponents	10	73	26	68	0	177

2006 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

1 Sept. 2	Louisiana Tech (3-6), W 49-10	1-0
2 Sept. 9	Nicholls State (4-5), W 56-7	2-0
3 Sept. 16	@USC (7-1), L 28-10	2-1
4 Sept. 23	Troy (4-4), W 56-0	3-1
5 Sept. 30	Kansas (5-5), W 39-32 (OT)	4-1
6 Oct. 7	@Iowa State (3-7), W 28-14	5-1
7 Oct. 14	@Kansas State (6-4), W 21-3	6-1
8 Oct. 21	Texas (9-1), L 22-20	6-2
9 Oct. 28	@Oklahoma State (5-4), L 41-29	6-3
10 Nov. 4	Missouri (7-3), W 34-20	7-3
11 Nov. 11	@Texas A&M (8-2), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
12 Nov. 24	Colorado (1-9), 2:30 p.m., ABC	
Dec. 2	Big 12 Championship at Kansas City, Mo., 7 p.m., ABC	

SCOUTING REPORT

GAME 11

At Texas A&M
Nov. 11

Location: College Station, Texas

Enrollment: 46,587

2006 record: 8-2

Coach: Dennis Franchione, fourth year

Series: Nebraska leads 9-2-0

2:30 p.m. (CST), ABC
Kyle Field, College Station, Texas

Quick Facts

Oklahoma converted a fourth-and-inches from its own 29 with 1:29 remaining to preserve a 17-16 win at College Station.

A&M sophomore quarterback Stephen McGee threw his second

interception of the season after 142 consecutive attempts without being picked off. It was the Aggies' first turnover in seven quarters.

Freshman running back Mike Goodson rushed for a career-high 127 yards on only 10 carries vs. Oklahoma.

Aggie to Watch

Sophomore running back Jorvorskie Lane is a load for any defense at 6-foot and 274 pounds. Lane scored his 18th touchdown of the season against Oklahoma, leaving him just one behind the second-oldest record in the Texas A&M record book — Joel Hunt's 19 rushing touchdowns in 1927. Lane has rushed for 616 yards.



BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

North				South					
	W	L	W	L		W	L	W	L
Nebraska	4	2	7	3	Texas	6	0	9	1
Missouri	3	3	7	3	Oklahoma	4	1	7	2
Kansas St.	3	3	6	4	Texas A&M	4	2	8	2
Kansas	2	4	5	5	Texas Tech	3	3	6	4
Colorado	1	5	1	9	Baylor	3	3	4	6
Iowa State	0	6	3	7	Okla. St.	2	3	5	4

Saturday, Nov. 4

Nebraska 34, Missouri 20
Oklahoma 17, Texas A&M 16
Kansas State 34, Colorado 21
Texas 36, Oklahoma State 10
Kansas 41, Iowa State 10
Texas Tech 55, Baylor 21

ON DECK

Colorado
Nov. 24

Location: Boulder, Colo.

Enrollment: 27,624

2006 record: 1-9

Coach: Dan Hawkins, first year

Series: Nebraska leads 20-8-2

2:30 p.m. (CST), ABC
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.



TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

WRX	87	Nate Swift*	6-2	195	So.
	7	Frantz Hardy*	6-1	180	Jr.
LT	54	Chris Patrick*	6-4	290	Jr.
	76	Lydon Murtha*	6-7	315	So.
LG	62	Andy Christensen	6-3	300	So.
	67	Jacob Hickman	6-4	280	Fr.
C	59	Brett Byford	6-3	300	Jr.
	50	Kurt Mann**	6-4	290	Sr.
RG	61	Mike Huff*	6-4	305	So.
	67	Jacob Hickman	6-4	280	Fr.
RT	70	Matt Slauson*	6-5	335	So.
	77	Carl Nicks	6-5	325	Jr.
TE	11	Matt Herian***	6-5	245	Sr.
	81	Josh Mueller**	6-5	265	Jr.
WRZ	83	Terrence Nunn**	6-0	185	Jr.
	17	Todd Peterson*	6-4	210	So.
QB	13	Zac Taylor*	6-2	210	Sr.
	8	Joe Ganz	6-1	200	So.
FB	41	Dane Todd***	5-11	235	Sr.
	42	Matt Senske	6-3	235	Jr.
IB	32	Brandon Jackson**	5-11	210	Jr.
	20	Marlon Lucky*	6-0	210	So.
PK	29	Jordan Congdon*	5-11	175	So.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

DE	44	Jay Moore*	6-4	280	Sr.
	99	Barry Turner*	6-3	250	So.
NT	54	Ola Dagunduro*	6-2	300	Sr.
	93	Ndamukong Suh	6-4	315	So.
DT	94	Barry Cryer*	6-2	280	Sr.
	43	Ty Steinkuhler*	6-3	280	So.
DE	90	Adam Carriker***	6-6	295	Sr.
	98	Zach Potter*	6-7	280	So.
SLB	34	Stewart Bradley***	6-4	245	Sr.
	88	Clayton Sievers*	6-4	240	So.
MLB	13	Corey McKeon*	6-1	225	Jr.
	40	Lance Brandenburg**	6-1	230	Jr.
WLB	51	Bo Ruud**	6-3	235	Jr.
	15	Steve Octavien	6-0	235	Jr.
SCB	25	Andre Jones	6-0	195	Jr.
	4	Rickey Thenarse	6-0	185	Fr.
SS	30	Tierre Green**	6-1	200	Jr.
	6	Major Culbert	6-0	200	Fr.
FS	8	Andrew Shanle***	6-1	210	Sr.
	9	Bryan Wilson	6-1	200	Jr.
WCB	2	Courtney Grixby**	5-9	170	Jr.
	23	Corey Young	6-0	195	Fr.
P	97	Dan Titchener	6-0	200	So.

TEXAS A&M OFFENSE

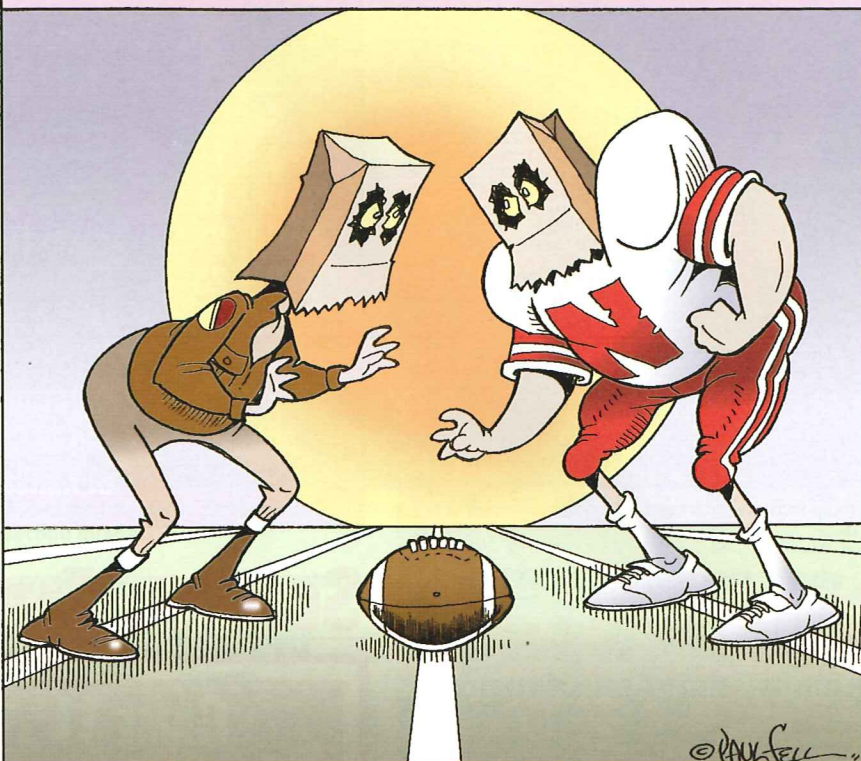
WR	14	Chad Schroeder**	6-1	186	Sr.
	5	Howard Morrow*	6-0	219	So.
QT	71	Yemi Babelola*	6-4	298	So.
	72	Alex Kotzur**	6-5	285	Sr.
QG	64	Kirk Elder**	6-5	298	Jr.
	76	Michael Shumard	6-5	305	RFr.
C	70	Cody Wallace*	6-4	294	Jr.
	63	Kevin Matthews	6-4	300	RFr.
SG	77	Grant Dickey**	6-5	315	Sr.
	51	Chris Yoder**	6-3	299	Jr.
ST	54	Corey Clark*	6-6	317	Jr.
	75	Travis Schneider*	6-8	295	So.
TE	13	Martellus Bennett*	6-7	248	So.
	81	Joey Thomas**	6-5	250	Jr.
WR	2	Earvin Taylor*	6-3	228	Jr.
	8	Kerry Franks**	5-11	196	Jr.
QB	7	Stephen McGee*	6-3	208	So.
	19	Ty Branyon**	6-3	213	Sr.
FB	24	Chris Alexander**	5-11	242	Jr.
	39	Greg Boothe	6-2	225	Sr.
TB	11	Jorvorskie Lane*	6-0	274	So.
	25	Courtney Lewis***	6-0	204	Sr.
PK	32	Lane Neumann**	6-0	174	Sr.

TEXAS A&M OFFENSE

DE	92	Chris Harrington**	6-5	267	Jr.
	86	Amos Gbumbles*	6-5	250	So.
DT	85	Red Bryant**	6-5	324	Jr.
	91	Kellen Heard	6-6	330	RFr.
NT	35	Bryce Reed***	6-0	295	Sr.
	95	Henry Smith	6-3	307	Jr.
DE	89	Jason Jack**	6-4	271	Jr.
	49	Cyril Obiozor*	6-5	257	So.
LB	37	Misi Tupe	5-10	250	Jr.
	50	Mark Dodge	6-2	222	Jr.
LB	10	Justin Warren***	6-3	242	Sr.
	46	Matt Featherston	6-3	240	RFr.
WH	28	Japhus Brown**	5-11	199	Jr.
	30	Chevar Bryson	6-0	185	RFr.
CB	4	Danny Gorrer*	6-0	178	So.
	13	Marquis Carpenter*	6-0	179	Jr.
CB	27	Jordan Peterson	5-10	186	RFr.
	18	Arkeith Brown*	5-11	170	So.
FS	26	Devin Gregg*	6-0	195	So.
	1	Johnathan Batson	6-1	190	Jr.
SS	33	Melvin Bullitt***	6-1	201	Sr.
	9	Alton Dixon*	5-11	207	So.
P	16	Justin Brantly*	6-4	228	So.

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USC 28,
Oregon 14

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USC 41,
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USC 23,
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Last Week
Season

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25-15

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31-9

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33-7

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32-8

2-2
31-9

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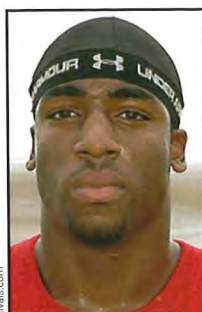
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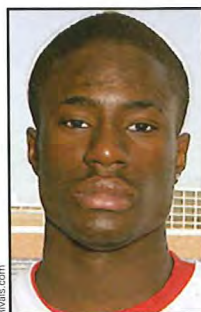
More to Come on Offensive Side

**Six of current
14 commits
designated for
offensive duty
By Rick Shaw**

As the month of October came to a close, the Nebraska football coaches were still looking to add another 10 commitments, or so, to their 2007 recruiting class. With three months to go before National Letter of Intent Signing Day in February, the Huskers claimed oral commitments from 14 athletes.



Jacob Amie



Hubert Anyiam

To date, Nebraska has managed to spread out available scholarships pretty evenly between the offensive and defensive sides of the ball. Six of the players currently committed are designated for offensive duty. All of the players slated for offense are skill-position athletes, headlined by Rivals.com Preseason All-American and four-star wide receiver Niles Paul.

As the Huskers head into the final

12 weeks of the 2007 recruiting cycle, they hope to add a few more blue-chip skill position players as well as two or three big-time offensive linemen. Here's a look at the six uncommitted offensive prospects most likely to join the Nebraska recruiting haul between now and February.

Jacob Amie is a talented, big-bodied receiver out of Tyler (Lee), Texas, looking in NU's direction. Though the 6-foot-4, 225-pound athlete committed to Texas Tech back in mid-August, he said he's still seriously considering accepting a scholarship offer to play tight end at Nebraska.

"Coach (Randy) Jordan of Nebraska is probably my favorite coach out of all of them recruiting me," Amie said. "He's really out front, and he tells me things straight-up without sugar. He's been truthful about their personnel at tight end, and he told me that 'we're recruiting

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2007

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Anthony Blue	DB	5-10	172	4.57	Cedar Hill, Texas
Quentin Castille	RB	6-1	234	4.6	La Porte, Texas
Jared Crick	DE	6-6	245	4.8	Cozad, Neb.
Demetrious Davis	DT	6-2	286	5.22	St. Joseph, Mo. (Benton)
Jared Glover	DE	6-5	220	4.75	Bixby, Okla.
Patrick Grant	DE	6-4	220	4.51	Lauderdale Lakes, Fla. (Boyd Anderson)
Ian Harris	TE	6-3	217	4.76	San Antonio, Texas (Churchill)
Roy Helu	RB	5-11	206	4.62	Danville, Calif. (San Ramon Valley)
Ryan Hill	TE	6-3	230	4.7	Arvada, Colo. (West)
Blake Lawrence	LB	6-2	199	4.65	Overland Park, Kan. (Shawnee Mission West)
Niles Paul	WR	6-2	210	4.4	Omaha, Neb. (North)
Shawn Sullivan	DB	5-11	182	4.4	Brenham, Texas
DeAndre West	DB	6-1	195	4.4	Oakland, Calif. (Wilson Prep)
Patrick Witt	QB	6-4	215	4.95	Wylie, Texas

For more daily recruiting information, visit HuskersIllustrated.com, a member of the Rivals.com network.

you to play for our team because you're the best guy for the job.'

"I'm going to Nebraska on a visit for sure. I'm just not sure when yet."

Through the first seven games this season, Amie utilized his unique blend of size, strength (345-pound bench press) and speed (4.59-second 40-yard dash) to haul in 15 receptions for 325 yards and three touchdowns. Rated the No. 72 prospect in the state of Texas by Rivals.com, Amie is considering scholarship offers from Texas Tech, Colorado, Missouri, Oklahoma State, Baylor, Kansas State, Texas A&M and others, in addition to Nebraska.

Another top-flight receiver prospect out of the Lone Star State giving the Huskers a long, hard look is Hubert Anyiam. The 6-0, 165-pound speedster (4.4) out of Garland (North Garland) has been one of the more productive wide receiver prospects in the Southwest region this season.

Through eight games, Anyiam had hauled in 65 catches for more than 800 yards. In addition to his impressive speed, he possesses a 40-inch vertical leap, allowing him to go up over defensive backs to make plays.

Rated the No. 76 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, Anyiam holds offers from a slew of schools, including Alabama, Iowa State, Kansas State, Nebraska, Texas Tech, TCU and others. After a visit to Lincoln in late October to watch the Huskers take on Texas, Anyiam admitted that Nebraska is one of the top schools on his list.

"Right now I'm strongly looking at Texas Tech, Nebraska and Alabama," Anyiam said. "My visit to Nebraska was excellent, definitely a '10' on a scale of 1 to 10."

Offensive guard prospect, Jaivario Burkes of Phoenix (Moon Valley), Ariz., may be the top offensive line prospect on the Huskers' board. The 6-4, 315-pound prospect is reciprocating the interest shown by the Nebraska staff and has scheduled his first official visit of the recruiting process to Lincoln for Thanksgiving weekend to watch the Huskers take on Colorado.

Rated the No. 6 offensive guard



Jaivario Burkes

RECRUITING NOTES

Omaha Back Makes Choice

By Sean Stevens

Collins Okafor of Omaha Westside, a 2008 in-state running back prospect recently highlighted in Huskers Illustrated, has helped lead Westside to an undefeated regular season and a first-round playoff win thus far in 2006.

Nebraska offered the speedy running back a scholarship for the 2008 recruiting class in mid-October, and Okafor accepted during the weekend of the Texas game.

"Well, Coach (Randy) Jordan just made me feel welcome, and I liked how he was talking to me about how he uses his (running) backs," said Okafor. "I felt like we believe in the same theory for backs — that a running back should be complete. They should be able to run, catch, block, use your eyes, have good vision and break tackles. I also like how he uses all the backs."

Okafor led Nebraska's Class A in rushing and finished with 226 yards and three touchdowns in a playoff-opening victory over Grand Island. He becomes the second verbal commitment for the 2008 class, joining fellow in-state recruit Baker Steinkuhler of Lincoln Southwest.

His decision may also end running back recruitment for the 2007 class, as the Huskers already have Quinten Castille of LaPorte, Texas, and Roy Helu Jr. of Danville, Calif., committed. It is expected that only a commitment from an elite back would be accepted by the Husker staff for the remainder of this recruiting cycle.

● Depending on your definition of "committed," NU may have added another player to their 2007 class after the Texas game. Rivals.com's No. 14-ranked cornerback (four stars) David Ross of Compton, Calif., committed to the Nebraska coaches, while at the same time telling them that he wanted to take some additional official visits to make certain of his decision.

"No, I'm not 100 percent committed. I asked, though, that I still wanted to take my trips," said Ross, who put his commitment level at 80 percent. "Nebraska has always been the school that I have always wanted to be at, but I just can't judge."

Ross plans to visit Oregon (Dec. 1), California, and Washington before signing day, but he said that it will be hard to knock the Huskers off the top of his list.

● Two of the top prospects expected to visit for the Missouri game were defensive tackle Chris Perry of Keller, Texas, and safety Latravis Washington of Bradenton, Fla.

Perry currently is committed to Miami, but he has decided to open his recruitment up a bit and take visits. The 6-foot-3, 319-pound four-star prospect has a solid relationship with Husker defensive line coach John Blake.

"Me and coach Blake of Nebraska are real, real cool. I have a better relationship with him than any of the other coaches recruiting me. That's why I'm really liking Nebraska," he said.

Washington (three stars) is listed by Rivals.com as a quarterback, but prefers the safety position that Nebraska is recruiting him for.

"When I think about the future, I see myself as a strong safety," he said. "I look at my size and the way I run, and I can see myself playing strong safety in college and beyond. Quarterback may be fun and all, but I have bigger dreams." ■



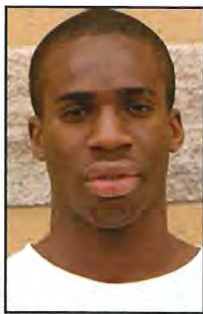
Collins Okafor

prospect in the country by Rivals.com (four-stars), Burkes is also looking hard at Arizona State, Michigan, Oregon and Oregon State. However, it's the Huskers that appear to have the current edge for his signature.

Another top prospect out of Arizona with the Huskers at the top of his list is Prince Amukamara of Glendale (Apollo), Ariz. The 6--1, 180-pound athlete has flown a bit under the radar this season despite putting up some impressive numbers. Through six games this season, Amukamara rushed for 1,100 yards and 21 touchdowns on only 87 carries. As a junior, he earned second-team all-state honors after averaging 11 yards per carry on 1,283 yards.

Amukamara holds scholarship offers from Nebraska, Fresno State, UTEP and UNLV, and Oregon, Nevada and Colorado are also in heavy pursuit. However, Nebraska is one of two schools, at the current time, that sit at the top for this explosive athlete.

"I'd have to say that Nebraska and Fresno State are recruiting me the hardest," Amukamara said. "I feel more connection with those two schools because we just talk the most.



Prince Amukamara



Taylor Dever

I really like talking to Coach (Bill) Busch from Nebraska."

One of the hottest rising offensive tackle prospects in the West, if not the entire country, is Taylor Dever of Nevada City (Nevada Union), Calif. Nebraska was one of the first schools to offer the 6-6, 289-pound lineman this fall, but since then, nine other schools have followed suit, including Oregon State, Washington, Washington State, Miami and Oregon.

Dever said he's not sure, as of yet, which campuses he'll visit this fall but that he'll visit Lincoln before making his college decision.

"I'm definitely going to visit Nebraska, because they're one of my top schools right now," Dever said. "We're thinking I'll get over there in

mid-December after our playoffs.

"I'm just one of those kids who grew up loving to watch football, and when I was doing that, one of the schools that I really liked to see was Nebraska."

The Huskers hope to pick up a junior college signal caller to compliment the talents of high school gunslinger Patrick Witt. Zach Lee, a 6-2, 200-pound quarterback from the City College of San Francisco in California, visited Lincoln in September and was extremely impressed with what he saw.

"It was all red and going nuts," Lee said. "The facilities are awesome. I really enjoyed the visit.

"Nebraska is my top place, but I want to take another visit or two just to see what else is out there."

Lee, whose father Bob played quarterback for 12 years in the NFL, completed 117 of 183 attempts (63.9 percent) through his first six games this season for 1,907 yards and 23 touchdowns. He's also considering overtures from Oklahoma and California, among others. ■

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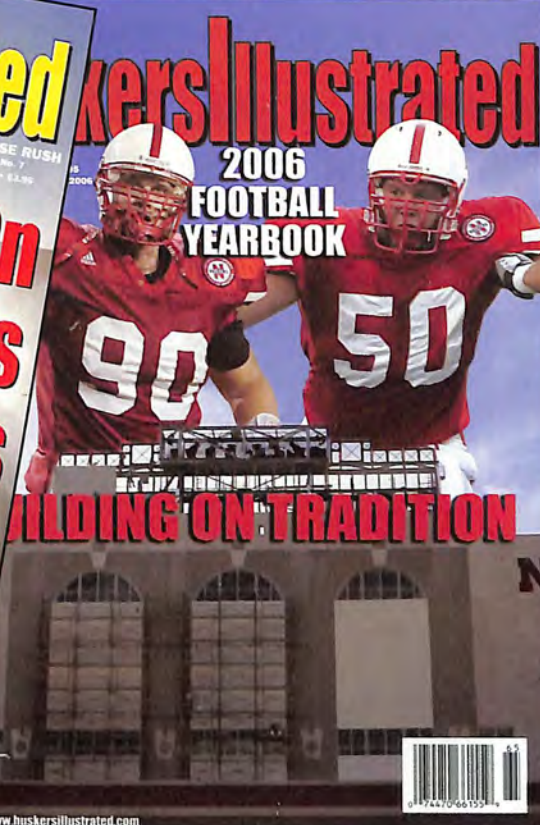
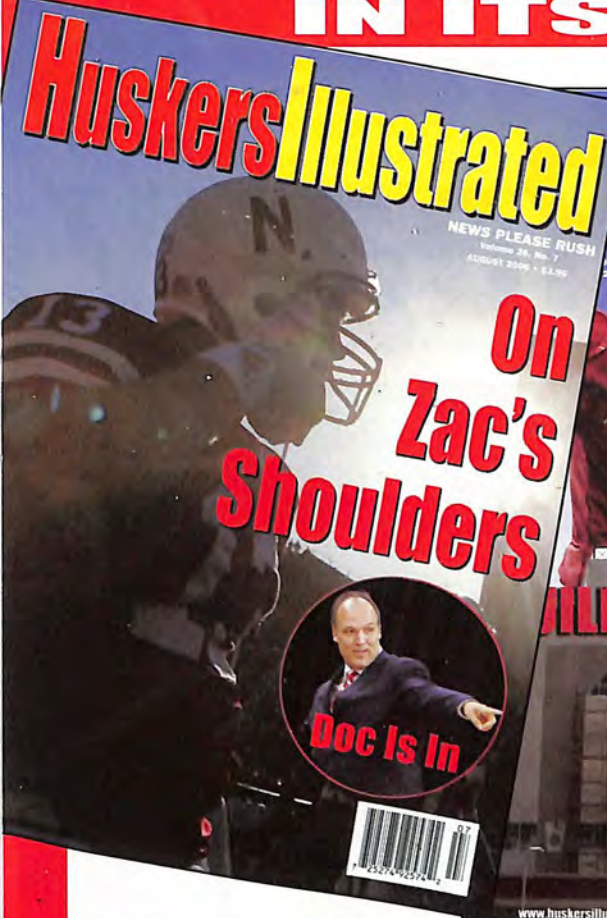


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... All The Time

Climbing the Charts

Pavan on pace to rewrite single-season record books with prolific junior year

By Todd Henrichs

When you're 6-foot-5, smart, athletic and dedicated, you don't set modest goals.

If you're Sarah Pavan, you shoot for the stars in whatever you do. You talk of not just winning a national championship as a volleyball player at Nebraska, you talk of winning multiple titles. In the classroom, you carry a 4.0 grade-point average, which is great unless you follow the rule that nothing less than perfect is good enough.

So becoming the fastest player in Nebraska history to reach 1,000 career kills, well that's simply part of Pavan's plan.

"That's what I'm paid the big bucks to do," Pavan joked after reaching the milestone in the 236th game of her Nebraska career, two games ahead of when former Husker Nancy Metcalf had hit the 1,000 mark.

"It would be great to leave here with the most kills in a career," Pavan added. "That would be amazing, but there's no telling if that will happen or not.

"That is a goal of mine, but we'll

see what happens."

Pavan is not only on a pace to surpass Allison Weston as Nebraska's all-time leader in kills, she's on a pace to rewrite the single-season record books with a prolific junior year.

Through 20 matches — all victories for top-ranked Nebraska — Pavan was averaging 5.14 kills a game, slightly ahead of the 5.09 mark that Metcalf established as the school record in 1999.

Only Metcalf and Lisa Reitsma in 1996 have ever averaged better than 5 kills a game for the Huskers in a single season.

Weston is the all-time leader with 1,778 career kills. With potentially 14 matches to play this season and another full season ahead in 2007, Pavan is already at 1,258 kills, good for eighth on Nebraska's all-time list.

The native of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, is well on her way to a second consecutive player-of-the-year honor in the Big 12 and potentially a reward as the national player of the year.

About the only thing that Pavan has yet to accomplish is the national championship, a title that Nebraska has flirted with but fallen shy of in her



first two years.

This season, even with reigning national player of the year Christina Houghtelling injured and out of the lineup, Pavan hasn't tempered her goals in any way.

In fact, if her performance at Texas was any indication, Pavan is more motivated than ever to accomplish the next big task on her list.

"She sets the highest goals you can set," said Nebraska head coach John Cook, who says goal-setting is ingrained into Nebraska's program. "That's one way to evaluate how you're playing."

Pavan, a two-time first-team All-



Nebraska junior Sarah Pavan, a two-time first-team AVCA All-American, leads the Big 12 in both kills and points per game.

American, was playing poorly, and top-ranked Nebraska was on the ropes at Texas until the Huskers' junior right-side hitter took over the all-important match.

Of her 22 kills, six came in the decisive game-five win over the nationally ranked Longhorns. After committing 12 errors, she played error-free down the stretch, allowing Nebraska to stretch its lead in the Big 12 standings to three matches over both Missouri and Texas.

"Pavan backed up what she's been saying, that she's not going to let this team lose," Cook said. "She had not

played well, even attack-wise, until the fifth game. But then she just took over."

Pavan has had three other 20-kill performances this season and was dominant against Missouri, hitting .424 while posting 18 kills, six digs and three blocks against the Tigers. She had two early double-doubles this season, quite an accomplishment for someone so tall, but not when you consider how determined Pavan is to play in the back row.

Her coaches and teammates agree that while they've grown accustomed to Pavan's magnificent kills, some of

the most dramatic swings coming from the back row, they still get excited anytime the junior makes a significant dig.

But if you really want to fire up Pavan and the Huskers, tell them they're beatable — even when they haven't been beaten all season. Or better yet, tell Pavan that you're going to shut her down.

"This team needs challenges so they dig down," Cook said. "They need to feel like they have something to prove."

"So when we hear teams say that, these guys respond well to that. That's when they come out very focused." ■

Todd Henrichs covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Lincoln Journal Star. He can be reached at 473-7439 or thenrichs@journalstar.com

RESULTS, SCHEDULE

Aug. 29 San Diego

W 3-0

Labor Day Tournament At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 1 St. Mary's	W 3-0
Sept. 2 Middle Tennessee St.	W 3-0
Sept. 3 Long Beach State	W 3-0

Players Challenge At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 8 Louisville	W 3-0
Sept. 9 Cal Poly	W 3-0
Sept. 10 Minnesota	W 3-1

Sept. 13 Kansas	W 3-0
Sept. 16 @Oklahoma	W 3-0
Sept. 20 Iowa State	W 3-0
Sept. 23 Texas Tech	W 3-0
Sept. 24 @Creighton	W 3-1
Sept. 30 @Baylor	W 3-1
Oct. 4 Kansas State	W 3-0
Oct. 7 @Texas A&M	W 3-0
Oct. 11 @Missouri	W 3-0
Oct. 14 Colorado	W 3-0
Oct. 18 @Texas	W 3-2
Oct. 25 Missouri	W 3-0
Oct. 28 @Kansas State	W 3-0
Nov. 1 @Texas Tech	W 3-0
Nov. 4 Oklahoma 7 p.m.	
Nov. 8 @Iowa State 6:30 p.m.	
Nov. 11 @Colorado 8 p.m.	
Nov. 15 Texas A&M 7 p.m.	
Nov. 18 Baylor 7 p.m.	
Nov. 22 @Kansas 7 p.m.	
Nov. 25 Texas 7 p.m.	

Nov. 30-Dec. 3 NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

Dec. 8-9 NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

Dec 14-16 NCAA Final Four At Qwest Center (Omaha, Neb.)

Things Are Looking Up



Jelena Spiric was selected as the Big 12 Newcomer of the Year in 2005.

Recovered from knee injury, Spiric 'a key, key player'

BY KATELYN KERKHOVE

When Jelena Spiric went down with a knee injury at the beginning of official practices a year ago, she wasn't the only one to suffer.

Without the then-junior forward, the Nebraska women's basketball team had to shift its entire game plan as it tried to work without Spiric. This included removing then-junior post Chelsea Aubry from the lane to the three-position and working without the depth on which the Huskers had been counting.

A year later, things are looking up.

Spiric is hitting the court at 100-percent healthy for the first time since her right ACL tear. Aubry is back in her natural position. And Husker coach Connie Yori is enthusiastic.

Spiric "is going to be a starter unless somebody makes a dramatic jump," Yori said. "She is a key, key player for us. Without her last year, we were a very different team; we had counted on her. I was excited about our team last year, especially early, but when her injury came, it really impacted our season. It affected us."

With Spiric sitting on the bench for the first time in her 15-year basketball career, the Huskers went 18-12 on the season, including a 1-1 performance at

the Big 12 Tournament and a 2-1 showing in the WNIT.

Sitting on the sidelines was one of the most difficult things Spiric has done, she said. While it was not the Belgrade, Serbia & Montenegro native's first injury — she hurt her left ACL prior to coming to Nebraska — not seeing the floor at all during the 2005-2006 season was tough to take.

But, with the experience of the prior injury, she said she knew what to expect and she knew she would see the floor again. "I had already been through one (ACL injury), so I guess that made it a little easier," Spiric said. "I couldn't be like, 'I'm done with basketball; I don't want to play anymore.' I couldn't say that, so I had to rehab and get back on the court. I've been practicing for too long (to stop)."

With her return, Spiric adds to Nebraska's senior leadership.

With five freshman, four seniors and only three sophomores and juniors combined, the Huskers are "top

and bottom heavy" Yori said. Spiric's experience will be useful in creating a team dynamic.

On the court, Aubry said, things have been clicking much better since practice began and the return of Spiric. The Big 12 Newcomer of the Year in 2005, Spiric obviously brings talent. But she still can improve and is working on developing a better 3-point shot.

What the Huskers lost without Spiric, however, was mostly her passing ability. Both Yori and Aubry said things will be much easier with her on the court because of that. The Huskers struggled to move the ball last season.

"Jelena can do a lot of things. She's very versatile," Yori said. "She can play a number of different positions. She's smart, a very good passer. We were not a great passing team last year, and we expect her to help us in that area, especially."

One positive of the injury was the valuable experience Aubry gained as a forward, the position she had to play to compensate for the loss of Spiric. Both Huskers have the ability to move in and out of the lane. Aubry considers Spiric one of the Huskers' best low-post scorers.

"Having Jelena back is awesome just as a player and a presence on the floor," Aubry said. "I don't have to play that position first of all, which is awesome. But she just makes everything on the floor easier for everyone around her. I have all positives to say about her. I just love playing with her."

While Spiric graduated with a biochemistry degree in May, the senior came back to Nebraska for her last year of eligibility. She is currently working on her masters degree and trying to decide what she will do with her future.

Playing basketball is her obvious first choice, she said, as she cannot imagine her life without it. But whether she will play in the United States or elsewhere is still unknown.

"I would love to play overseas, but we'll see. That's my goal," Spiric said. "I have no idea. You can't be like 'oh, I would like to do this' and then something else turns out to be the case. But I would definitely like to play basketball no matter what. It doesn't matter what country or what continent, but I would definitely like to play basketball."

Last season she couldn't because of the knee injury. Now she can. And everyone benefits. ■

WOMEN'S SCHEDULE

Nov. 1	*Nebraska-Kearney, W 122-55
Nov. 4	*Nebraska-Omaha
Nov. 10	**Arizona State
Nov. 12	**Florida Atlantic
Nov. 13	**New Mexico
Nov. 17	Cal State Fullerton
Nov. 24	@UC Irvine
Nov. 26	@USC
Nov. 28	Texas-Pan American
Dec. 5	Minnesota
Dec. 9	Michigan
Dec. 16	Northwestern
Dec. 19	@Creighton (Civic)
Dec. 21	Nicholls State
Dec. 28	***NC State
Dec. 29	***Florida/Alabama State
Jan. 3	@Texas
Jan. 6	Oklahoma
Jan. 13	@Kansas
Jan. 17	Kansas State
Jan. 20	@Missouri
Jan. 24	@Texas A&M
Jan. 27	Kansas
Jan. 31	Iowa State
Feb. 3	Baylor (FSN)
Feb. 7	@Kansas State (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 10	@Colorado (FSN)
Feb. 14	Texas Tech
Feb. 17	Missouri
Feb. 20	@Iowa State FSN Midwest)
Feb. 24	@Oklahoma State
Feb. 27	Colorado
Mar. 6-10	Big 12 Championship, Oklahoma City

*Exhibition

**Veterans Day Classic, Tempe, Ariz.

***Big 12 Tournament, Dallas, Texas

***State Farm Classic, Gainesville, Fla.

MEN'S SCHEDULE

Nov. 6	*Nebraska-Kearney
Nov. 11	*SIU-Edwardsville
Nov. 14	Nebraska-Omaha
Nov. 18	Creighton
Nov. 21	Lubbock Christian
Nov. 27	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Nov. 29	North Texas (FSN Midwest)
Dec. 2	@Rutgers
Dec. 9	@Oregon (FSN)
Dec. 17	Alabama A&M
Dec. 20	**Wyoming
Dec. 22	**San Francisco/Hawaii
Dec. 23	**TBA
Dec. 30	***Miami (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 3	Savannah State
Jan. 6	Western Kentucky
Jan. 10	@Iowa State (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 13	Oklahoma State (ESPN+)
Jan. 17	@Oklahoma (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 20	Colorado (ESPN+)
Jan. 24	Texas (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 27	@Kansas St. (FSN Midwest)
Jan. 29	Kansas (ESPN)
Feb. 3	@Missouri (ESPN+)
Feb. 6	@Texas Tech (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 10	Texas A&M (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 13	Kansas State (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 17	@Kansas (ESPN+)
Feb. 21	@Baylor (FSN Midwest)
Feb. 24	Missouri (ESPN+)
Feb. 28	Iowa State
Mar. 3	@Colorado (ESPN+)
Mar. 8-11	Big 12 Championship, Oklahoma City

*Exhibition

**Rainbow Classic, Honolulu, Hawaii

***Orange Bowl Classic, Miami, Fla.

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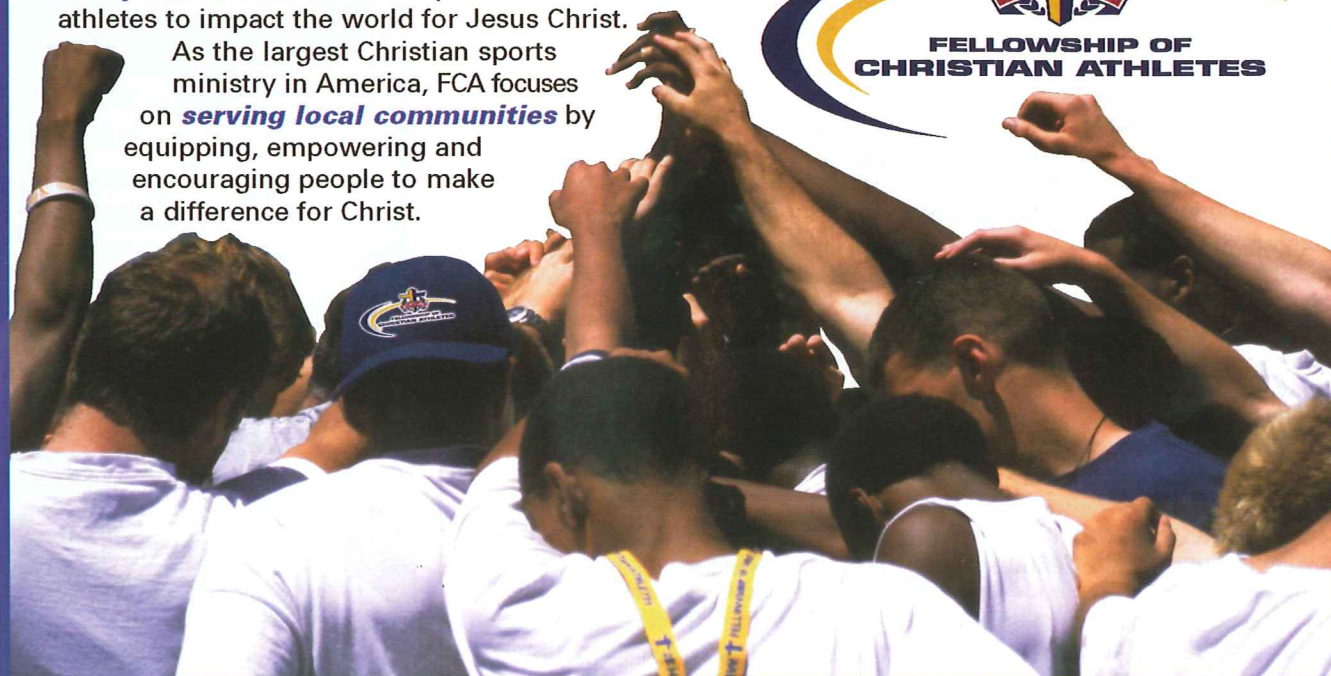
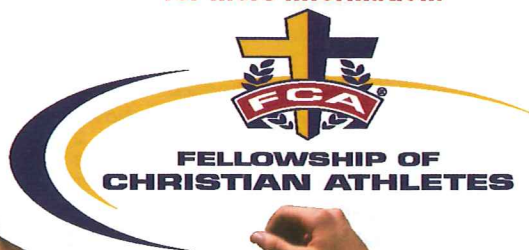
Scott Babin

Nebraska senior forward Brittany Timko (17) shared Big 12 Player of the Year honors with Oklahoma State's Yolando Odenyo, a conference-record third time that Timko has received the honor.

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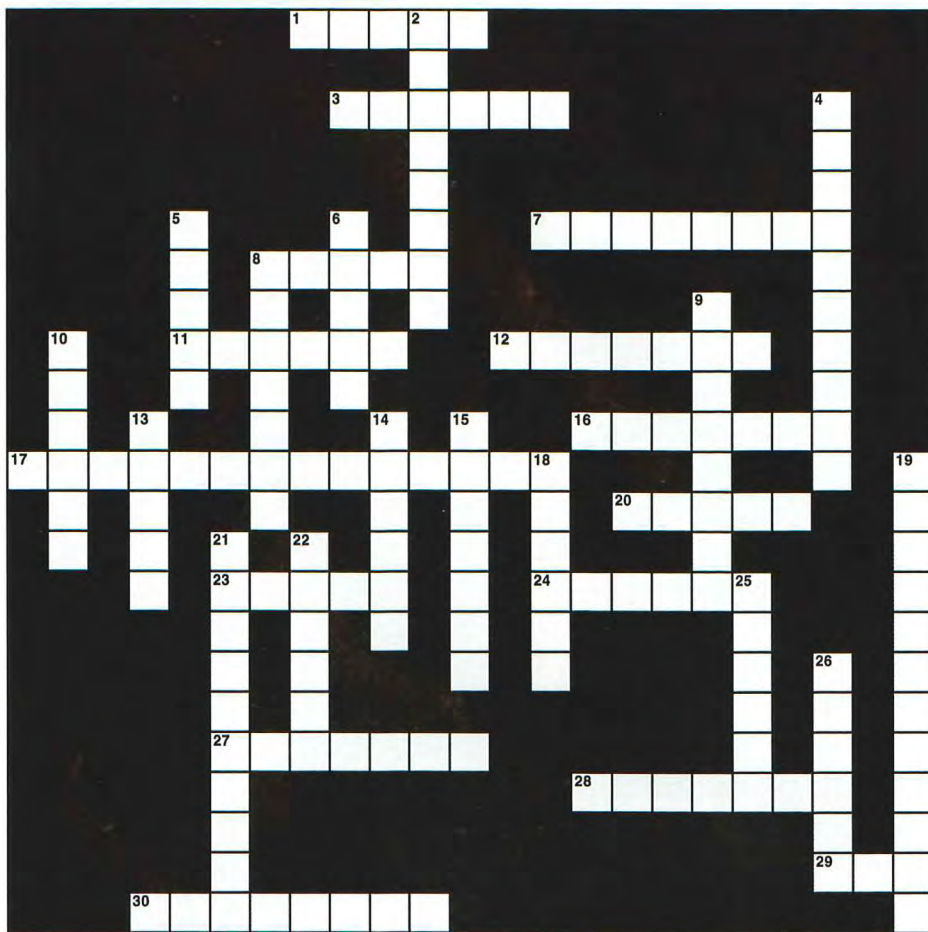
ACROSS

- 1 Holder for place-kicks
- 3 Leading receiver vs. Oklahoma State
- 7 NU athletic director
- 8 Texas A&M athletic director
- 11 Earned 7 letters in football & track (1998-2001)
- 12 Leading rusher vs. Oklahoma St.
- 16 Wears No. 29
- 17 Texas A&M campus location
- 20 2004 NFL Hall of Fame inductee
- 23 NU's 2005 bowl game
- 24 Texas A&M nickname
- 27 Quarterbacks coach
- 28 1994 Outland Trophy winner
- 29 Network for NU-Colorado game
- 30 Head coach in 1961

DOWN

- 2 Had 2 sacks vs. Oklahoma State
- 4 Texas A&M head coach
- 5 Safeties coach
- 6 Had interception vs. Oklahoma State
- 8 Wears No. 34 (defense)
- 9 Linebackers coach
- 10 Wears No. 24
- 13 Wears No. 34 (offense)
- 14 Texas A&M color
- 15 1997 Lombardi Award winner
- 18 Opponent in 2007 opener
- 19 NU's 2002 bowl game
- 21 2005 NFL first-round pick
- 22 1997 Outland Trophy winner
- 25 Leading tackler vs. Oklahoma St.
- 26 Tackle from Minnesota

Answers in Nov. 24 issue



HUSKERNUTZ



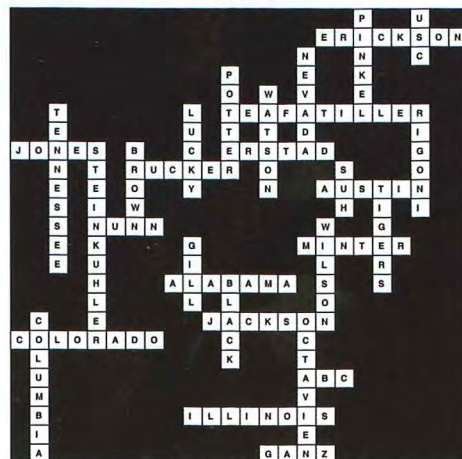
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Simple Addition

Despite being at less than full strength, defense sticks to the plan against Missouri



**Mike
BABCOCK**

DURING NEBRASKA'S weekly news conference on Tuesday, Corey McKeon explained it in terms of mathematics, simple addition really. Two plus two does not equal five.

Strength coach Dave Kennedy regularly reminds players that two plus two equals four, and no matter what they do, they can't make those numbers add up to five, McKeon said.

Kennedy's message is simple. "Do what you do, do what you normally do, and we'll make the play," said McKeon. "Guys are trying to do a little too much, trying to make plays.

"If you handle your job and trust the guy next to you, you'll be successful."

According to McKeon, the Cornhuskers were trying too hard to make two plus two into five in their 41-29 loss at Oklahoma State. They were ignoring responsibilities and trying to make plays. So a linebacker might leave his gap for another, allowing the ball carrier an opening.

The Oklahoma State game plan was solid. But the execution was not.

That's one of McKeon's pet peeves. The team works throughout the week in practice on something it knows an offense is going to do on Saturday and then doesn't execute what it practiced.

"That's very frustrating," he said. "That's something we did (against Oklahoma State)."

But the Cornhuskers didn't do it against Missouri. They executed, followed the defensive game plan, and despite being at less than full strength, they contained the Tigers' offense — and won, 34-20.

McKeon didn't play. Neither did Steve Octavien. And "we played a lot of young guys on defense," coach Bill Callahan said. "Our coaches came up with a new package for Missouri and that offense you saw today. I thought, at times, we kept them at bay. They still made some plays.

"But overall, the change-up in the mix on defense was effective at times."

One of the alignments included three down linemen, with end Adam Carriker moving inside; two linebackers — Bo Ruud and Lance Brandenburgh — and six defensive backs.

One of the six, true freshman Major Culbert, a strong safety who played in the middle where a linebacker would be, was "mirroring" Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel, Ruud said.

Culbert saw his most action, by far, according to defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove, and was credited with six

tackles. He "showed up in a very significant way," said Callahan.

With a three-man rush and Culbert in the middle, "that lets you play a little bit tighter on the outsides and not have to worry about the inside as much," Ruud said.

Missouri gained 363 total yards and averaged 5.2 yards per play. But both of those numbers were below its averages. And the Tigers reached the end zone only twice.

What a difference a week makes. "Last week, we were out of our groove, and everything was just kind of going wrong for us," said Ruud. "Today we were playing our style of defense.

"We were being attackers, and we did a real good job. It wasn't our (the linebackers') best performance. We were prepared. I don't know; some things just went wrong for us. But we played hard. I think the whole defense played real hard and executed, for the most part."

The Oklahoma State game influenced their preparation.

"I think as a team, collectively, we all looked at last week, and we were very disappointed and almost embarrassed with our effort," Ruud said. "So we all, together, took our focus to a new level. I don't even think we played our best game today, and we still beat a really good team.

"I think that shows you what kind of work we've been putting in."

The victory gives Nebraska what amounts to a two-game lead in the Big 12's North Division. The only way the Cornhuskers won't play in the

conference championship game now is if they lose both of their remaining regular-season games while Missouri wins its two.

"It's a big win for our program. I'm so happy for our kids," said Callahan. "They've worked hard. They've practiced hard. I knew we were on the verge of doing some good things."

The week's practices convinced him of that. The players were "quiet," he said. "And whenever it gets quiet out there on the practice field, you know your team is pretty well focused.

"So I saw that as a positive sign this week."

McKeon was limited to 30-some plays against Oklahoma State and none against Missouri. Watching from the sideline "sucks," he said. "You think you should be playing. Your role doesn't change. You've still got to be a leader out there. I'm still there making calls, doing stuff.

"If I recognize something, I'm yelling it out."

No doubt, he's also reminding the defense that two plus two equals four, and no amount of effort, however well-intentioned, can make it five. ■



**Freshman Major Culbert
saw his most action and
had six tackles.**

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